

The Impact of Perceptions of Democratic Decline:
Explaining French and German Foreign Policy toward Russia

BY

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Abstract

In the last ten years, Russia's growing assertiveness in international affairs has morphed into aggression as exemplified in Moscow's military interventions first in Georgia in 2008 and subsequently in Ukraine in 2014. European countries responded to these events in markedly different ways. Whereas they decided not to implement sanctions against Russia in 2008, they reversed the non-confrontational course and sanctioned many of Russia's top officials and a variety of businesses in 2014. This dissertation uses discourse analysis to investigate the motivations behind these contrary responses through the examination of French and German foreign policy rhetoric. I argue that explanations based on the realist expectations of balancing behavior, neoliberal institutionalist and liberal accounts highlighting the role of international institutions, and economic and other domestic interests, or constructivist explanations focusing on identity and international norms cannot fully explain French and German responses to Russia's interventions. Rather, the reversal of their positions on sanctioning Russia can be traced to changes in the perceptions of the French and German policy makers regarding the state of democracy in Russia. Consistent with the logic of democratic peace research, I find that French and German policy makers refrained from taking confrontational action against Russia in 2008 when they perceived it as an emerging democracy but were willing to confront Russia in 2014 when they perceived it to be regressing into authoritarianism. Theoretically, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of perceptions of the target regime, specifically with respect to the democratic peace theory, and suggests that these interpretations apply also to the trajectory of domestic politics in the target state. It expands the scope of democratic peace theory to include transitioning states and argues that democratic foreign policy is not limited to the dyads of

mature democracies but can also be applied to situations when the target state is perceived to be moving on a path toward western-style liberal democracy.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Motivating Question and Plan for the Dissertation.....	1
Action and Reaction: Russian Interventions and European Responses.....	5
The Russo-Georgian war	5
Multiple crises in Ukraine.....	7
Theoretical Foundations.....	11
What is foreign policy?.....	11
“Mainstream” theoretical explanations of states’ foreign policy	13
The Art of the Possible - Competing Explanations of Foreign Policy Behavior	26
Hypotheses.....	34
Methodology	35
Analysis of French Foreign Policy Discourse	44
French data sources.....	45
What did they talk about? Issues in French-Russian discourse	47
In their own words: French foreign policy motivations.....	54
Preeminent discourses — tracing the most salient French rhetoric over time.....	75
Discussion — assessing the France findings	80
Analysis of German Foreign Policy Discourse.....	88
German data sources.....	88
What did they talk about? Issues in German-Russian discourse	92
In their own words - German foreign policy motivations.....	97

Preeminent discourses — tracing the most salient German rhetoric over time	115
Discussion — assessing the Germany findings	122
Conclusions	130
Reviewing the puzzle	130
Methodology review	131
Conclusions compared	132
Broader implications	136
Future considerations	140

Motivating Question and Plan for the Dissertation

On 8 August 2008, Russia launched a large-scale land, air, and sea invasion of Georgia shortly after the Georgian Army attacked ethnic Russian separatists in the city of Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, a breakaway province of Georgia. Russian and South Ossetian forces defeated the Georgian military in a matter of days in what the Russian government dubbed as a “peace enforcement operation”. Responding to the Russo-Georgian hostilities, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who held at that time the rotating presidency of the European Union, negotiated a cease-fire between Moscow and Tbilisi. On 26 August 2008, then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another breakaway region of Georgia. With Russian support, the two territories remain outside Georgian jurisdiction as de facto independent countries. While European countries universally expressed disapproval of Russia’s actions, they took little concrete action, specifically rejecting the implementation of sanctions. The only response was to suspend negotiations between the EU and Russia on a renewal of their Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Bilateral relations between Russia and the majority of European states continued unabated however.

Subsequently, in the wake of Ukrainian regime change in February 2014 that replaced a pro-Russian president with a pro-western one, the Crimean parliament sought greater independence from the central government. After failing to obtain their desired autonomy, the Crimeans voted to become independent from Ukraine proper. In March 2014 Russian troops occupied Crimea in support of secessionist elements, resulting in the eventual annexation of the peninsula that had been part of Ukraine since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Soon after, ethnic Russians in the eastern provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk also sought independence from the

central government and began seizing control of these territories. While Russia did not overtly assist these new self-proclaimed republics, they supported the rebels through the provision of equipment and personnel. Furthermore, Russia kept up to 40,000 soldiers adjacent to the Ukraine border for several months in a clear signal to the Ukrainian government not to take aggressive action against the separatists. As a result of the annexation of Crimea and the continuing support for instability in Ukraine, France and Germany responded to Russian intervention by supporting European sanctions on certain individuals in Russian and Ukraine and sectors of the Russian economy.

Both instances are cases of Russian military intervention in domestic political conflicts in sovereign states, which resulted in their territorial disintegration. In both cases, Russia acquired formal or informal but de facto control over the breakaway regions. However, key European nations—France and Germany particularly—responded to Russia’s actions differently, despite the markedly similar international and domestic contexts for foreign policy making in these two democratic states. Why did France and Germany reject sanctions against Russia following its intervention in Georgia but then support their implementation in the case of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine? The disparate reactions of these two European nations form the subject for this study. On a broader theoretical level, the dissertation seeks to deepen the understanding of the sources of democratic foreign policy.

Through in-depth comparative case studies of French and German foreign policy, including discourse analysis of official rhetoric of the French and German governments toward Russia’s military interventions, this research will test alternative explanations of democratic foreign policy informed by the mainstream theoretical approaches to international relations

(realism, liberalism, and constructivism). It will show that neither state interest in security-maximization nor other pragmatic considerations consistently account for the foreign policies of these democratic states. Constructivist approaches emphasizing culture, identity, and international norms likewise fail to provide a full explanatory picture.

In line with the democratic peace theorists, this dissertation will argue that regime type, more specifically a democracy, predisposes a state to particular foreign policy actions toward other democracies. Unlike much of the democratic peace research, this thesis will further show that democracies' perceptions of target states more than objective indicators of democracy motivate decision makers to enact distinctly different policies. Moreover, these actions reflect an interpretation of a regime's political trajectory, i.e., whether it is moving toward or away from becoming democratic. Specifically, I contend that the change in the French and German foreign policy toward Russia's intervention can be accounted for by the differences in French and German government's perceptions of Russia's progress or decline in movement toward accepted democratic standards. In 2008, France and Germany understood Russia to be a democratizing, if not already democratic, state and chose to forego support for sanctions. However, by 2014, these states had ceased to consider Russia in these terms, allowing them to endorse European sanctions. What these findings suggest is that the democratic peace logic rests not only on the presence or absence of certain institutions but also on whether leaders in democratic countries interpret their presence or progress toward creating them.

The research in this paper focuses on French and German positions on sanctions with the acknowledgment that the ultimate decision to apply sanctions or not is a result of collective bargaining within the EU. Economic sanctions are not the province of any particular country but

rather emerge as a result of multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the EU. Institutional voting rules require broad agreement for policy decisions and cannot rest solely on the preferences of a limited number of countries. Consequently, EU decisions to abstain from or implement sanctions are not exclusively the result of German and French preferences. On the contrary, it is feasible to enact policies without the support of either of these states. At the same time, both of these states are acknowledged leaders within the Union, to the extent that their status has been described as “embedded bilateralism” (Krotz and Schild, 2013) and their agreement with each other is usually necessary to achieve multilateral agreement. For instance, France and Germany diverged on whether the EU ought to take collective action in Libya in 2011, which prevented a coordinated response (Miskimmon, 2012). While other conglomerations of countries exert collective influence at times, other member countries diverged from the shared Franco-German perspectives with respect to Russian interventions. Both the United Kingdom, as part of the “Big Three,” and Poland, a member of the Weimar Triangle, frequently act in concert with France and Germany. However, each of these countries favored sanctions in response to both crises (Freeman, 2008 notes both the British and Polish desire for tougher response to Russia). Therefore, based on their leading roles within the EU and observed differences over time, France and Germany provide a suitable representation of the concerns that motivated the differences in the broader institutional decisions.

The rest of the dissertation proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief summary of key events from the conflict years. Next I review the theoretical foundations for analyzing foreign policies. Building on those foundations, I develop a number of plausible, theoretically-informed explanations for French and German foreign policy behavior. Subsequently, I review the

discourse analysis methodology and summarize the data collection approach and the data used for testing the study's hypotheses. The next chapters focus on applying discourse analysis to the two case studies, first the French and then the German, in order to evaluate the theoretical explanations of these country's foreign policies. Finally, I provide a summary and combined conclusions.

Action and Reaction: Russian Interventions and European Responses

Russia's 2008 war with Georgia and Russia's intervention in Ukraine are instructive for comparative analysis of democratic states' responses to intervention. These two cases provide a rough control along important dimensions. First, both target states are former Soviet republics beset by internal political unrest based on ethnic minorities that have appealed to Russia for support against the existing internationally recognized regime. Furthermore, each state contained a significant faction committed to greater integration with Europe and the west in general. In addition, the pattern of Russian response in each case matches the other, i.e., when internal political disorder resulted in violence, Russia intervened in defense or support of separatist groups, despite objections from the host nation. While significant differences also exist, particularly in the size of each respective country's territory, population, and economy, these do not detract from the validity of the comparison.

The Russo-Georgian war

Russian air and ground forces crossed into South Ossetia on 8 August 2008 in response to Georgian military operations previously undertaken in that breakaway region. The Russians justified their intervention on a humanitarian basis, arguing that they were responding to Georgian ethnic cleansing or genocide of ethnic Ossetians. For its part, Georgia had attacked into

South Ossetia in order to “restore constitutional order” following attacks on its Georgian security forces by South Ossetian forces (International Crisis Group, 2008). After three days of fighting, Russian forces had driven Georgian army out of South Ossetia proper and continued into Georgia proper, i.e., areas that had not previously been part of the internationally recognized territory of South Ossetia. At the same time, Russian forces had enabled fighting in the other separatist republic, Abkhazia, and begun both land and sea operations against Georgia. Russian actions once again extended beyond the boundaries of the separatist region into acknowledged Georgian territory. Their ships interdicted operations at the port of Poti, Russian planes bombed the Georgian city of Gori, and their troops occupied significant amounts of land in western Georgia in and around that city. Although Georgia had declared a unilateral ceasefire on 10 August 2008, Russia continued to expand its presence until 12 August, creating what it deemed “buffer security zones.” (Felgenhauer, 2009)

In response, French President Nicolas Sarkozy drafted a ceasefire proposal to restore peace and ultimately to arrive at an international solution to the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. From 12-14 August, Sarkozy and his Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, visited both Russia and Georgia to present the plan and obtain their concurrence. After some minor edits, the agreement was signed, which consisted of six clauses. Among these was the requirement for Russian forces to withdraw to their positions prior to the outbreak of conflict, with the condition that Russian peacekeeping forces could implement additional security measures while waiting on “an international mechanism.” Given its ambiguity, this point led to differing interpretations and continued tension between Russia and Europe through October, when Russia finally pulled back from its self-proclaimed buffer security zones.

In the meantime, Russia took an even more controversial step in recognizing the independence of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Once again European leaders vehemently opposed this step and threatened retaliation and called an emergency session of the EU Council to discuss both the unilateral recognition of the breakaway republics and Russia's continued occupation of Georgia. At first, talk of sanctions came from a range of states including France, the UK, and Poland, although the focus was on diplomatic sanctions such as suspending Russia from the G8 or withholding support for Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) rather than economic sanctions. Declining to initiate sanctions against Russia, the EU chose to postpone future discussions regarding a new EU-Russia partnership agreement until Russia withdrew its forces. On the other hand, individual countries quickly reestablished bilateral interactions with Russia. For example, Germany held intergovernmental discussions at the beginning of October, 2008. Chancellor Angela Merkel implicitly admitted that Russia had not fully implemented its agreed-upon actions in saying that the six-point plan is being worked out "step-by-step" but felt that the best way forward would be continued engagement (Office of the Chancellor, 2008). Frustration with Russian influence in the separatist republics remained into the new year and beyond but never amounted to concrete action.

Multiple crises in Ukraine

Beginning in late 2013, dissatisfaction with the existing government led Ukrainians to call for the removal of President Yanukovich. The impetus behind the protests came from the president's cancellation of a trade deal with the European Union and agreement to accept economic help from Russia instead. These protests eventually led to the departure of the president and the appointment of a new pro-Western government in February 2014. On 27 February, unidentified

gunmen seized government buildings in Crimea, and soon after similar elements moved to secure airports and other infrastructure on the peninsula (Higgins and Erlander, 2014). Responding to an appeal from the Crimean prime minister for assistance in safeguarding the area, the Russian parliament authorized military intervention in both Crimea as well as the rest of Ukraine on 2 March. Due to the presence of the Russian Black Sea fleet and associated military bases at Sevastopol, Crimea already contained a significant amount of Russian forces who were tasked with assisting local security forces in maintaining “security” on the peninsula, citing concerns about protecting ethnic Russians “from chaos and disorder” (Smale and Erlanger 2014). In early March, the Crimean parliament voted to secede from Ukraine with an eye toward becoming part of Russia (Herszenhorn, 2014) and set a date for a referendum to be held on 16 March for the people to express their preference between remaining part of Ukraine, albeit with greater autonomy, or becoming a part of Russia. Not surprisingly, the official results overwhelmingly favored the latter option, which were reported to show 97% of the population in favor (Herszenhorn and Cowell, 2014), although western observers noted that the presence of Russian troops may have influenced the vote, which was immediately condemned as illegal and destabilizing (Obama 2014; Hoyle 2014, DeYoung and Witte 2014). Russia proved eager to embrace the apparent decision of the Crimean people and dutifully annexed the peninsula the following day (White, 2014).

Russia’s support for secession and subsequent annexation deeply concerned western leaders. Each step of the process elicited strong reactions from European statesmen who objected to what they saw as violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. In response to the Crimean referendum, the European Union implemented travel restrictions against over

twenty Russian and Ukrainian officials whom European states believed to be responsible for violations of international law in Ukraine. Soon after, the actual annexation of Crimea led to further sanctions against additional individuals.

Russian involvement in Ukraine did not end with the annexation of Crimea; rather, it remained robust throughout the remainder of 2014. Many ethnic Russian in the eastern half of the country were unhappy with the change in Ukrainian leadership and its western orientation, leading to unrest and calls for greater autonomy at least, if not secession, as seen in the self-declared Luhansk Peoples Republic. Russia denied any presence of its military forces in Ukraine, although western European countries and the United States contended otherwise. Nevertheless, Russian support for uprisings in eastern Ukraine was undeniable. At the very least, in April 2014, 40,000 Russian ground troops remained deployed just over the Ukrainian border in the Russian regions of Belgorod, Kursk, and Rostov, sending a message to Ukrainian officials that Russia was prepared to respond, just as they had in Crimea, to appeals from the Russians inside Ukraine for assistance, ostensibly for humanitarian purposes (Myers and Smale, 2014). While the number of troops eventually decreased, the Russian presence just across the border remained more significant than before the conflict. Furthermore, Russia provided support within the separatist republics in the form of both personnel and equipment. Despite Russian denials, NATO officials provided evidence of materiel within Ukraine that could not have belonged to the Ukrainian military and therefore had to have come from Russia (Lander and Gordon, 2014). The West also accused Russia of sending troops to support rebels under the guise of humanitarian relief, which they condemned as a violation of international law since the aid had not been requested or approved by the government in Kiev (Demirjian and Birnbaum 2014). Finally, western states

held Russia accountable to various degrees in the shooting down of a civilian aircraft, Malaysia Air flight MH17. The missile was certainly Russian-made. While Russian soldiers most likely did not fire it, Russia must have provided the system to whomever attacked the plane and most likely provided training on its employment (Dutch Safety Board, 2015; Gude and Schmid, 2014; Miller, 2014). Russian culpability came from the fact, as German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated, that “Russian leadership has not done enough to stop the separatists (Steinmeier 2014d).

Russia’s continued involvement in Ukraine led to tangible reactions on the part of the United States and European countries, which firmly believed that Russia was contributing to the instability of the political situation and the escalation of military conflict in Ukraine¹. Beginning in mid-March with restrictions on a limited number of individuals in response to the annexation of Crimea, the European Union continued to add names to the list to sanctioned individuals.² On 15 April, the EU expanded sanctions to those whom it believed had misappropriated Ukrainian funds (Council of the European Union, 2014). Due to continued fighting and instability in eastern Ukraine, additional measures were agreed upon on 12 May 2014. In addition, the other members of the G8 decided to postpone Russian participation in the group, cancelling the scheduled meeting in Sochi, Russia and moving it to Brussels. Finally, NATO likewise cancelled previously planned high-level staff talks with their Russian counterparts. European attitudes toward Russia continued to sour as 2014 progressed, with continued fighting and the shoot-down

¹ While not always concurrent and of equal extent, US and European sanctions generally followed a similar, gradual process of increasing severity. As one official stated, “It’s a little bit of a yin-yang [relationship],” one senior official said concerning US and EU punitive measures against Russia over Ukraine. “At times we’re catching up with them, at times they’re catching up with us” (LaFranci, 2014).

² A timeline of EU sanctions is available at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/ukraine-crisis/history-ukraine-crisis/>

of MH17. Perceiving Russian recalcitrance, the EU continued to increase the depth of sanctions³ against Russia, eventually moving beyond individuals to include companies in specific industries, including those in the energy sector to which European nations had previously felt vulnerable.

As these brief reviews of the conflicts highlight, similar cases of Russian interventions led to different reactions in each instance on the part of European countries. The rest of the dissertation investigates the reasons for the contrasting foreign policies on the part of France and Germany, two leading European states. The analysis of these decisions closely relates to evaluation of international relations and stems from the same theoretical bases, which are reviewed below.

Theoretical Foundations

What is foreign policy?

As a field of scholarly inquiry, the comparative study of foreign policy has been defined by a search for theoretical accounts of policies and actions of national governments that are oriented toward the external world. Comparative method has been central to the analysis of the sources of states' foreign policy in this area of research. In contrast to the broader field of international relations, foreign policy analysis explicitly advocates considering multiple levels of analysis as well as a combination of a range of factors in explaining states' foreign policy choices (Neack, Hey and Haney, 1985; Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 2004; Neack 2008; Hudson 2014).

It is important to note that there are at least two distinct areas of comparative foreign policy analysis. One is the study of the factors behind particular foreign policy outcomes. This

³ Additional EU sanctions imposed on 16 and 25 July as well as 28 November.

type of research examines a particular policy choice and attempts to explain the motivations behind one choice rather than another, what could be called the “what” and “why” questions. Another type of inquiry into states’ foreign policies focuses on the process through which a particular decision was made or the process of foreign policy decision-making. These studies emphasize the “how” aspects of arriving at a particular decision. In this study, I will focus on explaining foreign policy outcomes, not the decision-making process, by France and Germany.

For analytical purposes, the diverse explanations of states’ foreign policy choices can be classified along two dimensions: (1) the primary locus of foreign policy motivations—external or internal; and (2) the source of these motivations—rational/material or normative. Table 1 presents a summary of the mainstream theories of foreign policy classified along these dimensions.⁴

At the highest level, predominant theories of international relations and foreign policy diverge from each other based on competing assumptions pertaining to goals pursued by countries (material interests vs. normative concerns) and the source of these objectives (internal vs. external). Realists, neoliberal institutionalists, and liberals argue that states are rational actors whose interests are purely material, but these theorists disagree on the source of priorities. Realists and institutionalists contend that interests are exogenously determined and common among states; whereas liberals assert that interests are endogenously determined, the result of the

⁴ Foreign policy theories are not identical to those of international relations but they are related and built on the same foundations. Some scholars have strenuously asserted that the two have nothing to do with each other such as Waltz (1979, 1996) who famously claimed that his theory of international politics “does not tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday.” (Waltz 1979: 121) Others (Hoffman, as quoted by Waver 2003: 28) have tried but struggled to unify them. At the same time, many scholars note the link between them. Fearon (1998: 289) argues that “an important and natural way that [international relations and foreign policy] are the same.” Modifying that claim slightly one scholar makes the distinction that “IR is *interaction*; Foreign Policy is *action*” (Rittberger, 2004)

Table 1 — Theoretical Bases of Foreign Policy Motivations

		<u>Source of Foreign Policy Motivations</u>	
		Material Interests	Normative Concerns
(Primary) <u>Locus of Foreign Policy Motivations</u>	External/ Systemic	Realism (polarity) Neoliberal Institutionalism	Structural Constructivism (international norms)
	Internal/ Domestic	Liberalism (incl. Democratic Peace, domestic interests groups and institutions)	Domestic Constructivism (strategic culture, identity)

preferences of dominant social actors. Alternatively, constructivists see state action motivated by normative considerations with similar distinctions between the sources of state goals. Structural constructivists maintain that state action is influenced by its desire to comply or enforce international norms. Finally, domestic constructivists claim that state interests are based on internal characteristics which then dictate the pursuit of particular policies. In the section below, I explain each of these theories in greater detail, highlighting the connections between international relations and foreign policy and reviewing previous research related to French and German foreign policies specifically. These perspectives also form the basis for developing potential explanations of the two cases under consideration and provide the theoretical underpinnings for discourse analysis.

“Mainstream” theoretical explanations of states’ foreign policy

Neorealism offers a wide variety of explanations of states’ foreign policies. Nevertheless, they all begin with the assumptions shared by all variants of political realism. First, neorealists view the international system as anarchical and states as primary actors of international politics. States are

assumed to be unitary and rational actors pursuing their own interests defined in terms of power or security. Being inherently self-centered and surrounded by like-minded units, states cannot rely on each other for their own security, resulting in a self-help system. All states are functionally alike, but they differ in terms of the material capabilities that determine their ability to pursue their self-interest along with the nature of polarity of the international system.

From the realist perspective, therefore, states are expected to respond to a threat (or a perception of one) or merely to a change in the distribution of power in the international system that they translate into a security threat. According to the “father” of neorealism, Kenneth Waltz, states will engage in balancing behavior to prevent the emergence of a hegemon (Waltz, 1979). The internal balancing entails building up material capabilities while the external balancing involves making alliances. States in this perspective are concerned with relative rather than absolute gains. Therefore, when a state in the system begins to increase its power relative to others, upsetting an existing balance, other states within the system will react to restore the balance. While Waltz and later neorealist scholars suggested that states merely react to changes in the distribution of power in the international system, Mearsheimer (2001) argued that states can never be sure that they are secure and therefore must continue to pursue advantages until they become the hegemon. Furthermore, others (Walt, 1987) have asserted states seek to balance threats rather than power, suggesting that factors such as aggressiveness, offensive capability, and geography impact a state’s reaction to another’s increase in power.

A state’s relative power, therefore, is one of the key factors that explains foreign policy choices from a neorealist perspective. In other words, foreign policies are a function of the number of poles in the system and the capabilities of a particular state. Naturally, small states

have fewer options than larger states. In the anarchic international system, however, all states will pursue policies that protect their autonomy within or enhance their ability to influence the system. French and German alignment with Russia against the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 could be explained from this perspective. Conceivably, the United States' willingness to act unilaterally in Iraq despite the objections of European countries was a threat to the existing systemic conditions. A victory over an adversary (Iraq) and the addition of another (presumed) ally would make the US even more powerful than it already was. In addition, American dominance over Iraq would increase its influence in the middle east, giving it the ability to have even greater impact on events in the region in particular regarding energy security and Iran's nuclear program. Therefore, in response states took action to reduce American power and influence by aligning together in opposition.

Prior research on European foreign policy has explained French and German decisions from the realist perspective. To many observers of French politics (Bucher et al. 2013; Simón 2013a, 2013b; Gomart 2007; Larsen 2012), French actions in the first decade of the twenty-first century reflect realist concerns with changes in power distribution within the international system. France invests significant effort in maintaining political influence in Europe and beyond in order to establish and maintain regional and global multipolarity. In response to a unipolar international system dominated by the United States, France has pursued foreign policies aimed at countering American hegemony. French support for European integration stems from its desire for Europe to be one center of power in a multipolar world (Bucher et al., 2013). In another instance, as German economic power increased, France took actions to counter this change in the distribution of power, albeit economic. Strengthened Franco-Russian ties are seen as a way to

counteract American and German influence in Eastern Europe, just as alignment with Germany and Russia against the US with respect to Iraq was designed to counteract the growing power of the US. Similarly, research on Germany highlights the influence of material factors in determining German foreign policies. Stephen Szabo (2014) asserts that German policies are a result of commercial realism and that geo-economic factors have driven relations between Germany and Russia.

Neoclassical realists reject one of the foundational assumptions of the neorealist perspective. Accepting assertions regarding anarchy, a focus on survival, and states as rational actors, these scholars (Rose, 1997; Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, 2009) suggest that consideration of systemic conditions is not enough to account for international behavior. Rather, it is necessary to incorporate domestic influences on foreign policy choices. Changes in relative power are not deterministic; rather, they open possibilities for certain foreign policy actions. At the same time, internal considerations impinge upon decision-making and therefore create “an imperfect transmission belt” through which systemic imperatives are translated (Lobell et al., 2009: 4). State reactions to international events are constrained by factors such as a lack of consensus among decision makers regarding the international context or the domestic political environment. Elite perceptions of threats or competing prioritization of national interests may lead to contrasting ideas of how best to respond to changes in the environment. If decision makers feel that a policy would damage future political prospects, they will decide to pursue a course of action contrary to what pure system dynamics would demand. This is not to say that material factors no longer predominate or that preferences of substate actors determine interests

as in liberal theory. Rather, the systemic assumptions remain but domestic factors play a mediating role causing deviation from expected behavior based purely on systemic impulses.

From this point of view, French and German foreign policy choices can be explained by considering factors linked to a variety of domestic circumstances. Increasing Russian assertiveness should have led to regional balancing by Germany and France according to purely structural thinking, but this is not what occurred. Rather than automatically responding to changes in the balance of power, policy makers in these states considered other issues such as energy security, shared security interests (e.g., counter-terrorism and operations in Afghanistan), and regional security dynamics. The former reflects the domestic concern with reliable sources of hydrocarbons while the others demonstrate that more urgent, pragmatic considerations mitigate decisions based purely on changes in relative capabilities.

The literature offers several analyses of the French and German policy choices informed by the premises of the neoclassical realist approach. Reflecting a priority of regional over global concerns, Gomart (2007) suggested that France concerned itself with keeping Russia tied to Europe to prevent instability in eastern Europe. Similarly, Larsen (2012) explained Germany's reserved response to the Russia-Georgia conflict as a manifestation of the intervention of domestic considerations such as prioritization of economics as well as a disagreement on the extent or nature of the threat that Russian aggressions posed to Germany.

Neoliberal institutionalism (NLI) (Axelrod and Keohane, 1985; Keohane, 1984, 1988) shares some theoretical assumptions with the neorealist theories but it differs in its views of the nature of interests and how states pursue them. NLI scholars retain the assumptions that the international system is anarchic and that states are unitary rational actors. Furthermore they argue

that interests are exogenously defined but do not focus exclusively on security, adding the pursuit of material wealth as an objective of states. Moreover, this perspective dispatches the assertion that the international system necessitates constant competition but instead suggest that cooperation between states is the norm. Absent this inherent enmity, a states is free to pursue absolute, mutual gains without fears about another getting a greater benefit than itself. In order to lock in future gains and prevent cheating, states create institutions, both formal and informal, which include ideas, norms, rules, and etiquette (Holsti, 2004, quoted by Carlsnaes, 2012: 121). Foreign policy from this perspective is shaped by a state's participation in institutions.

Implicit in an institutional perspective is a norm of multilateralism (Ruggie, 1992, 1993; van Oudenaren, 2003), which Ruggie defines as “an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct” (1993: 11). It conveys an expectation that states will not take unilateral action in response to international crises but rather that they should coordinate among themselves to arrive at a resolution based on accepted principles of behavior, particularly “negotiation, compromise, and the virtues of agreed constraint” (van Ourdenaren, 2003: 33). Multilateralism, which may appear in formal agreements (treaties) or be agreed to informally, represents a common practice and a largely institutionalized belief in Europe. Both Germany and France are known for their commitment to multilateral institutions for coordinating state policies (Moravcsik, 1993, Krause, 2004, Cheneval, 2007, Tiersky, 2010, Ikenberry, 2015) with the former particularly acknowledged for its “multilateral reflex” (Maull, 2000) in which it seeks first and foremost consensus solutions to problems.

Europe is a highly institutionalized environment, with a wide range of mechanisms for coordinating state actions. States such as France and Germany are members of many formal,

regional international organizations—the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the Council of Europe—that impact their foreign policies to varying degrees. International Organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization, and the G8 similarly exert influence on French and German foreign policy preferences and decisions. In addition to formal institutions, France and Germany participate in a number of informal, multilateral institutions, especially with respect to security issues. Both countries actively participated in negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program as part of a multinational effort that also includes Russia and China, known as the E3+3 (three countries from Europe as well as three from elsewhere) or the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, plus Germany). Similarly, both states strongly supported the efforts of the Quartet⁵ (the EU, Russia, the United States, and the UN) in developing peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestine problem.

Previous research on French and German foreign policy contains a significant amount of support for the institutionalist perspective. Scholars have described how EU membership circumscribes their foreign policies, subjecting them to constraints but also providing opportunities (Blunden, 2000; Pertusot, 2012; Aggestam, 2000; von Klaeden, 2009; Krotz and Schild, 2013). Most relevant for this study, observers note the impact of EU membership on member countries' policies toward Russia (Smith, 2004, Karp, 2009). While EU member countries may be tempted to engage with Russia on a bilateral level, they likewise take into account how these relations may impact on other EU countries and the collateral effects on the

⁵ While delegating formal representation to the EU, both states actively endeavored to restart and continue negotiations.

institution as a whole. The EU, for example, established formal venues for coordination and cooperation with Russia such as the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement for encouraging multilateral engagement with Moscow. The same issues emerge with respect to NATO, which has set up the NATO-Russia Council for coordination the Alliances' activities with Russia.

Further removed from the neorealist assumptions that started the discussion but still sharing a rationalist foundation, liberal theory is founded on the primacy of internal factors in defining state interests and concomitant action. Retaining the view of states as rational actors pursuing their interests, liberals argue that relations between states are based on patterns of interaction resulting from the pursuit of particular goals as determined by the preferences of dominant social actors (Moravcsik, 1998, 2003; Doyle, 1987, 1997, 2012; Oneal and Russett, 1997, 1999). Rather than being unitary actors, states merely represent a transmission mechanism for certain domestic actors such as political leaders, governing elites, interest groups, and business interests.

Sources of domestic preferences generally fall into three categories — ideational, economic, and international. Ideational perspectives suggest that interactions stem from desired social goals such as human rights, international cooperation, and international law (Doyle, 1997: 213). Second, commercial idealism presents a purely functionalist perspective, defining state behavior to the interests of domestic and transnational economic actors. Relations between states are based on market incentives and reflect the preferences for powerful commercial entities that reflect their desired course of action to maximize economic gain. Finally, international liberalism, which more frequently appears under the label of the Democratic Peace Theory

(DPT), focuses on the manner in which domestic political institutions aggregate preferences. Democratic institutions foster accountability and constrain potentially parochial interests of leaders in order to pursue to the preferences of broader society because of the desire of the governing coalition to stay in power. Narrowly, this perspective relates to the Kantian peace in which the combination of democratic institutions, economic interdependence and international institutions leads to the creation of a “separate peace” between democratic states. At the same time, the logic can be applied to non-democracies as well since domestic structures therein may likewise constrain the actions of their leaders.

In addition, liberal theorists highlight the impact of interdependence between states (Keohane and Nye, 1977, Oneal and Russett, 1997, Moravcsik, 1998). This perspective notes that interactions between states occur across a wide range of sectors. For instance, states are not merely connected by economic relationship but also by political, social and cultural ties. It is not merely that states and substate actors interact with each other, but that they have become mutually dependent on each other. Furthermore, these ties lead to distinct costs and benefits that constrain policy choices of each state.

A number of studies assign liberal explanations to French and German foreign policy and scholars have asserted the primacy of economic interests particularly in determining foreign policies in both countries. Chivvis and Rid (2009) argue that commercial concerns define specifically the German-Russian relationship. Similarly, Jean-Marie Guéhenno (2014) boldly asserts that economics is the sole base of French foreign policy choices. Other research (Gomart 2007) highlights the competition within France between values and interests, highlighting the battle between domestic actors with differing preferences. Adomeit (2015) likewise describes the

influence of domestic political forces, both in and out of government, on changing German policies toward Russia.

In contrast to both realist and liberal explanations, constructivists argue that state action is motivated not by pragmatic considerations of self-interest, but normative and ideational factors. Domestic variants of constructivism argue that state culture and identity shape its foreign policy (Katzenstein, 1996a, 1996b; Wæver, 2003; Wiarda, 2013). As seen in rationalist theories, states act in accordance with interests. However, from a constructivist perspective, these desired goals stem from their culture and an understanding of their identity, reflecting a distinct national political culture or way of doing things, rather than being a mere product of rational calculations based on exogenous preferences such as maintaining sovereignty or maximizing economic gain. State action conforms to its perception of itself. For example, French foreign policies are based on an understanding of how France ought to act in a certain situation to remain true to its ideals. Specifically, relevant to the subject of this study, constructivists argue that a state's democratic identity, as opposed to rational calculations, leads it to prioritize the goals of democracy promotion and human rights in its foreign policy, and emphasize peaceful resolution of disputes, especially with regard to fellow democracies (von Soest and Wahman, 2014).

In addition, relationships with other states are mutually constituted (Wiarda, 2013; Wendt, 1992). Cooperation or opposition are based on the states' concepts of self and other. A country that desires to be a partner of another country can only be so if both states share the same aspiration. Similarly, adversaries are only truly in confrontation when both sides consider themselves at odds. These perspectives get reinforced by action over time to become constituted identities.

International explanations informed by constructivist thinking alternatively point out the role of international norms and the overall ideational structure of the international system in shaping foreign policy behavior of states (March & Olsen, 1989; Tannenwald, 1999; Wendt, 1992, Hopf 2002). Norms have been defined as “collective understandings that make behavioral claims on actors” (Checkel, 1998) or more simply “collective expectations for a given identity” (Katzenstein, 1996b). Important to note in either definition above is the emphasis on the collective nature of the norm as well as its influence on actors. It is also critical to highlight the distinction between constitutive and regulative influences, which reflect the agent-system distinction mentioned above. The former describes how identities shape interest and therefore behavior while the latter describes the expectations of interstate behavior that constrain or enable state actions (Katzenstein, 1996a).

Much of the research concerning French and German foreign policies point to constructivist explanations (Chivvis and Rid, 2009; Hellmann, 2009; Karp 2009; Katzenstein, 1997; Opperman 2012; Rittberger, 2001; Sparling 2003; Treacher 2003a, 2003b). In both instances scholars emphasize historical events that have left their mark on these states’ identities. As a result of the wars of 20th century, Germany has developed a “culture of restraint,” according to which it is conservative in responding to conflicts with other states. Germany has also maintained its unique focus on being a “civilian” (as opposed to military) power, using resources other than military capabilities in its conduct of international affairs. Similarly, France has developed certain unique foreign policy priorities and interests. The legacy of World War II and its aftermath led to a distinct Gaullist foreign policy which focuses on maintaining France’s *grandeur* (greatness) as well as its *rang* (rank) among leading nations of the world (Treacher,

2003, 2013). Consequently, France has perpetuated a view of itself as a great power, a prospect that has been enhanced by its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, and believes that it has a responsibility to continue to involve itself globally. Furthermore, as a former colonial power, France feels a responsibility to promote peace and prosperity in a significant number of African countries as well as in the Levant.

Alternatively, the foreign policies of these states are seen as the result of conforming to international norms (Davidson, 2013; Rittberger, 2001; Wagnsson, 2010; Wolff, 2013). European states face a number of both constitutive as well as regulative norms that guide their behavior and would be expected to uphold international norms of peaceful conflict resolution, respect for state sovereignty, and the protection of human rights. As a result of its commitment to upholding these expectations, European countries, particularly Germany, have earned the title of “normative powers” (Manners 2000, 2006).

Finally, one variant of the liberal perspective, the Democratic Peace Theory, suggests that a state’s foreign policy is a function of its regime type.⁶ Fundamentally, the DPT research finds that democracies behave differently toward each other than they do toward non-democracies. Pacific behavior between joint democracies has been attributed to the externalization of democratic norms, such as conflict resolution through compromise and negotiation (Kahl 1998; Maoz & Russett, 1993), or the constraints stemming from domestic political structures (Fearon, 1994; Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, & Smith, 1999; Schultz, 1999). At the same time, democracies engage in conflictual behavior with regard to non-democracies when necessary. The scholarship on DPT is largely represented in large-n cross-national studies, whereas only few

⁶ This research agenda has its basis in liberal thought as noted above. However, I list it separately because scholars advance explanations that depart from liberal foundations.

qualitative analyses have been used to trace the DPT causal mechanisms in selected historical cases. However, one study of German-Russian relations (Adomeit, 2015) clearly asserts that German policy toward Russia has changed in recent years in response to both domestic and foreign policies in Russia.

Recently, scholars have begun to apply the logic of the democratic peace to sanctions as a tool of statecraft, being another form of coercive behavior (Cox & Drury, 2006; Lektzian & Souva, 2003; von Soest & Wahman, 2015). Similar to the foundational DPT conclusions, initial research on sanctions suggested that democracies employ sanctions more often but are less likely to do so against fellow democracies (Cox and Drury, 2006; Lektzian and Souva, 2003). Likewise, other scholars suggest that democratic institutions constrain decision makers in democracies in the use of economic coercion against democratic states. Relevant to this particular study, additional research has shown that democracies restrain sanctioning behavior with respect to security-related conflicts but not with respect to those in the economic domain (Wallace, 2013).

One shortcoming of this literature, however, is the way it dichotomizes all regimes into two categories—democracies and non-democracies—considering nothing in-between. The research has not focused on what could be called the “trajectory” of the target regime or the direction of political change. Do democratic states act differently toward states that are stable, firmly entrenched autocracies versus states that are transitioning toward or away from democracy? One recent study on Western reactions to domestic crises (such as a coups d’état or mass protests) found that states’ policies are based in part on the sender’s expectation of success,

which depends on the stability of the existing regime (von Soest and Wahman, 2014). This suggests that states do, in fact, relate differently to states that are in transition.

Certain variants of DPT and constructivism highlight the importance of a state's perception of other nations. For instance, one early study (Owen, 1994) examines the impact of perceptions and finds that apparently deviant cases in which democracies have gone to war with each other, can be explained by the democratic aggressor's perceptions of the target state as both "illiberal" and "non-democracy". At the same time, perception of democracy alone may not suffice. Farnham (2003) suggested that the perception of a regime's commitment to democratic principles such as negotiated settlement, even if not a democracy itself, determines a democratic state's foreign policy behaviors toward the non-democracies.

The Art of the Possible - Competing Explanations of Foreign Policy Behavior

Each of the above theories offers a potential explanation for French and German reactions to Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine. Below, I present theoretically-informed potential explanations of the French and German foreign policy choices toward Russia based on preliminary empirical considerations. None of these theories has been tested on the two cases of Russia's intervention in Georgia and Ukraine respectively, and obviously many objections could be raised to the assertions. The utility of these possibilities lies in presenting a plausible case that identifies the factors that might possibly inform foreign policy decisions and can serve as the foundation for analyzing French and German discourse. Furthermore, these explanations will inform the hypotheses examined in the remainder of the thesis and serve as the foundation for discourse analysis.

The neorealist paradigm offers three potential explanations for French and German reactions to Russian interventions. From a purely systemic perspective, states are expected to react to shifts in the balance of power at the international level by balancing against those states that increase their relative capabilities. Earlier in this study, I cited the example of France and Germany aligning with Russia to balance the growing power of the US. According to this same neorealist perspective, France and Germany would be expected to balance against any future changes in the international status quo. The Russo-Georgian war resulted in no systemic shifts and therefore no balancing behavior on the part of states, which explains the limited European reaction, i.e., the lack of support for sanctions. Russia neither gained any territory nor increased its military capability. Having been present in the separatist areas of Georgia since the early 1990s, Russia's military presence there after 2008 did not increase the amount of territory over which they maintained (de facto) control. Furthermore, the Russian intervention, despite its success against Georgian forces, was plagued by poor performance and failures. This was not the case with the Ukrainian intervention, however. Through its annexation of Crimea Russia added territory and population as well as secured its unfettered access to the Black Sea. Furthermore, the Russian military had undertaken significant defense reforms since its performance in 2008. Defense spending had increased significantly. Weapons systems had been upgraded. Command and control headquarters had been streamlined and exercised (*Economist*, 2014; Nichol, 2011; Rathke, 2015). Unlike Russia however, European capabilities had decreased as a result of reduced defense spending. Moreover, from an alliance perspective, NATO was regionally less capable in Europe itself because the United States had removed significant forces from Europe. In sum, the neorealist perspective suggests that French and German behaviors were the result of

changes in states' relative capabilities at the international level. By implementing sanctions against Russia, these states demonstrated a desire to balance against increasing Russian power.

The defensive realist perspective suggests that geographic proximity, offensive capability, and aggressive intentions moderate the systemic impact of changes at the international system level. In the cases considered here, these additional factors can also account for French and German behavior. More specifically, Georgia is further removed from France and Germany than Ukraine. In addition, as mentioned above, the Russian military failed to show an offensive capability capable of threatening or defeating a more capable adversary. Having witnessed Russian military modernization and having seen the ability of Russian forces to reinforce Crimea and mass on the border of Ukraine, European leaders would have perceived greater offensive capability in Russian forces. Finally, the fact that Russia was (in the eyes of some) merely responding to Georgian attacks on Russian peacekeepers may have prevented policy makers from seeing Russia as aggressive in their intentions in 2008. In later years, elites could no longer ignore Russian aggressive intentions toward its neighbors and former Soviet republics. As a result of distinct differences in threat perception, European countries adopted contrary policies.

For the neoclassical realist, an explanation can be found in the impacts of domestic factors on foreign policy. While, from a strictly structural perspective, France and Germany should have opposed Russia in both instances, an argument can be made that they did not do so because of elite assessments of the opportunities and challenges accompanying the systemic changes. In particular, concerns with energy security, the presence of other shared security interests, and the desire for Russian assistance with more prominent security issues prevented European policy makers from taking actions to confront Russia in 2008. However, by 2014,

these topics were less salient and no longer influenced the thinking of foreign policy makers, allowing France and Germany to take actions to balance against Russian interventions. Energy security has been a significant concern to Europe for many years, especially for the states of central and eastern Europe. For instance, Germany relies on Russian gas imports for approximately 75% of its demand for energy. While not as highly dependent on Russia because of its nuclear power infrastructure and imports from Norway, France remains cognizant of the challenges faced by its EU neighbors with regard to energy and therefore maintains a focus on maintaining reliable sources of energy throughout the region. In addition, both France and Germany desired Russian support in regard to security concerns that Russia was enabling or supporting. Despite the possibility of a long term threat due to increased Russian power, other security concerns took priority in the eyes of French and German foreign policy elites. For instance, in 2008, NATO forces in Afghanistan were supported by a logistics supply line that ran through Russia. All three countries similarly felt mutual concern about security-related matters such as international terrorism, organized crime, and nuclear non-proliferation. However, as the salience of these concerns faded, they failed to exert similar influence on French and German policy makers by the time of the Russian intervention in Ukraine. While European dependence on hydrocarbon imports from Russia has not abated, the associated insecurity has decreased as a result of an EU plan implemented in 2009 requiring states to maintain reserves and developing alternative sources of oil and gas. In addition, by 2014 NATO had reduced its operations in Afghanistan and was less reliant on supplies transiting Russia. Finally, other threats to security such as terrorism had declined in importance and western Europe required less Russian assistance to counter them. Consequently, as a result of reduced salience of competing security

interests, systemic imperatives resulted in more traditional response, namely confrontation through the implementation of sanctions.

The institutionalist focus suggests yet another explanation for the different policies pursued by the western European states, based on the effectiveness of multilateralism as an institutional form. In other words, their reactions were based on the ability or inability to arrive at coordinated multilateral solutions to international problems. Beginning with shared opposition to the American-led invasion of Iraq, France and Germany believed that Russia was committed to multilateral solutions. These states (and the EU) had also been working with Russia to reach coordinated international solutions to issues concerning Iran and the Middle East. In keeping with this establish practice, Germany and France choose to pursue multilateral, consensual solutions to the Russia-Georgia conflict incorporating Russia rather than supporting sanctions, which resulted in the negotiated cease-fire. By the time of the conflict in Ukraine, however, France and Germany no longer sought resolution through multilateral venues that included Russia, especially with regard to situations in which Europe and Russia disagreed, such as the uprising and civil war in Syria. Russia had not cooperated with the West in their attempts to transition power in Syria from the Assad regime and was therefore no longer seen as a reliable multinational player, despite its complementary efforts in the other areas. Since the influence of multilateralism on Russian foreign policy had waned, France and Germany pursued a solution to the Ukraine crisis that did not include Russia and supported EU sanctions.

A liberal explanation is rooted in shifting domestic preferences. Accounting for differences in French and German policies between 2008 and 2014 therefore requires either a change in dominant societal actors or changes in preferences of the most influential domestic

groups. Liberals suggest that France and Germany had an interest in maintaining cooperative relations with Russia based on economic and other material interests in 2008 while these concerns had declined by 2014 and allowed these countries to take a more confrontational stance toward Russia. As mentioned above, many observers of both French and German foreign policy assign an economic motive to all foreign policy decisions, which manifested itself in the limited response to Russian intervention in Georgia. Having increased economic ties between the two countries significantly in the early 2000s and feeling continued pressure from business interests, each country wanted to avoid disrupting their deepening commercial ties in 2008. Energy imports from Russia constituted an enormous portion of the trade but relations between the countries spread into many other sectors as well. Germany exported cars, machinery, electrical engineering components, and pharmaceuticals in addition to providing support in the areas of logistics, transport, and aviation. Similarly, French exchanges with Russia consisted of investments in aircraft, communications, infrastructure, and high speed railways. Sanctions against Russia would obviously have disrupted these exchanges. Absent a more powerful domestic force, commercial actors prevailed, resulting in a lack of support for sanctions against Russia. While trade remained robust in 2014, with overall levels increasing in both bilateral relationships, and additional areas of cooperation, such as space projects between France and Russia, emerging to tie the countries together, the preferences of these actors for refraining from confrontation and maintaining commercial ties failed to hold sway in 2014. The constraints of bilateral economic relations vanished and France and Germany supported the imposition of sanctions against Russia.

Constructivist accounts offer both internal as well as systemic explanations for the observed state behavior. Domestic accounts look to state identity as the basis for state action and might suggest that the difference came from changes in shared identity. In 2008, France and Germany felt that Russia was becoming an integral part of Europe, committed to the shared values of liberal democracy and market economy, and therefore they perceived it as part of the group of European nations. As a result, France and Germany felt it was also consistent with their identity as democratic states with normative goals of promoting economic and political development elsewhere in Europe not to respond to a modernizing state in a confrontational manner and opposed sanctions against Russia. However, by 2014, France and Germany no longer subscribed to this understanding of shared identity, which transformed Russia into a threatening Other. The pull of shared identity no longer served to inhibit confrontational behavior between the western European countries and Russia, resulting in support for sanctions.

At the same time, other constructivist perspectives assert that collective expectations of western European states motivate foreign policy decisions based on what actions are appropriate for their state in a particular context. In conflict situations, European states place significant emphasis on the legitimacy of state action, both their own and that of other states with which they will interact. With regard to the situations under considerations, a constructivist perspective suggests that norms of human rights, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and/or peaceful resolution of conflict directed the policies of France and Germany. Specifically, it could be argued that the Russian intervention in Georgia did not violate human rights norms since it could be seen as a legitimate response to Georgian attacks on ethnic Russians in South Ossetia in 2008. In contrast, French and German decision makers viewed the Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014 as a

violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Alternatively, the western European states may have been motivated by norms of international (or regional) peace and stability. In 2008, the conflict between Russia and Georgia ended in a negotiated cease-fire that was acceptable to both parties as well as other regional actors (states and international organizations) relatively quickly and without more confrontational actions. However, in 2014 Russia and Ukraine did not reach a cease-fire without the implementation of sanctions.

The final potential explanation relies on democratic peace logic, which asserts that democratic states behave in distinctly different ways toward democracies than non-democracies. In addition, I argue that this approach should also incorporate decision makers' perceptions of the target state, not merely objective measures of its domestic politics. Furthermore, the DPT assertions apply to states in transition as well; regardless of where they stand at the moment, the direction of movement of domestic institutions matters as well. The argument here is that Russia was *democratizing*, on its way to becoming a democracy and therefore western European democracies ought to react to Russia as if it were a democracy already. This is not to say that Russia was more of a democracy in 2008 or that decision makers saw Russia as a democracy. According to accepted measures of democracy, the state of the Russian domestic politics did not change between the two time periods.⁷ Moreover, foreign policy elites did not suggest that Russia had fully transitioned to a western-style democracy; despite the presence of institutions, other facets such as freedom of the press were absent. However, believing Russia to be moving toward liberal democracy, French and German politicians treated Russia as if it were a democracy and in a non-confrontational rather than hostile manner, refraining from imposing

⁷ Freedom House rated Russia consistently in 2008 and 2014 as a 5.5 (not free) on a scale where 1 is best and 7 is worst. The Polity IV database gave Russia the same overall score in both years of 4.

sanctions in 2008. However, in 2014, these states believed Russia to be retreating from liberal democracy and therefore related to it as a non-democracy, choosing to support coercive action.

Hypotheses

The foregoing arguments offer plausible explanations for the observed differences in foreign policy behavior and provide the foundation for the following hypotheses focused on factors consistent with competing theoretical approaches. In subsequent sections of this study, I will evaluate these hypotheses based on the data obtained through discourse analysis.

Based on the neorealist perspective suggesting that structural changes in the distribution of power necessitate state responses:

H1: Perceptions of change in systemic and/or regional distributions of power and polarity explain the change in French and German foreign policy behavior.

Similarly, stemming from the neoclassical realist argument that internal factors of a state mitigate responses to systemic imperatives:

H2: Changes in elite perceptions of Russia as a threat or an ally explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

From an institutional approach that asserts that states seek institutional solutions, both formal and informal, to maximize gains and ensure future benefits:

H3: The weakening of the multilateralist institutions that include Russia, France, and Germany explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

Finding its basis in changes in domestic preferences, a liberal explanation focused on maximizing economic interests:

H4: Concerns related to economic relationships with Russia explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

The first constructivist account focuses on the influence of state identities and suggests:

H5: Perceptions of a Russian European identity explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

Another constructivist approach focusing on international norms and state reaction to violations of them yields:

H6: Perceptions of Russian violations of international norms explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

Finally, the DPT logic arguing that democratic states relate differently to other states based on regime type leads to the following:

H7: Perceptions regarding the state of democracy in Russia explain French and German foreign policy behavior.

Methodology

Evaluating the hypotheses above requires connecting the suggested explanatory factor to changes in foreign policy choices of European countries in response to Russian interventions. The analysis begins therefore with the focus on foreign policy behavior—rejecting sanctions vs. supporting sanctions—as the dependent variable, in which there is observed change. On the other side of equation, each potential explanation suggests an independent variable. The goal of this study is to discover which of these factors were present/absent and changed from Time 1 (2008) to Time 2 (2014) either in terms of being present/absent or the intensity of their impact that will indicate an association with the dependent variable.

To evaluate the alternative theoretical explanations for the French and German foreign policy, this study employs the methodology of discourse analysis. A robust amount of scholarship exists on discourse analysis, particularly political discourse analysis (Chilton, 2004; Chilton and Schäffner, 2002, 2016; Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; Fetzer, 2013; Fetzer and Weizman, 2006; Gee, 2010) and more specifically related to European foreign policy (Carta and Wodak, 2015; Hansen and Wæver, 2002; Howarth and Torfing, 2005; Larsen 1997; Jorgensen, 2015; Morin and Carta, 2014; Wagnsson, 2008). This approach to foreign policy analysis relies on the study of empirical evidence in the forms of text and talk, i.e., utterances in both written and verbal form. Given the availability of this data from a wide variety of sources including governmental publications and media reports, this methodology avails itself to a rich source of data (Chilton and Schäffner, 2016).

Since social and political activity does not exist without the use of language, much can be learned about the practices through the study of language in social context, which is captured by the notion of discourse. Discourse analysis encompasses a series of approaches to the study of language use and its functions. It rests on the premise that politics is ‘done’ through language, i.e., the struggle for power or cooperation takes place through the venue of communication (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002). Political discourse analysis does not claim to uncover “true” or “hidden” motivations of political actors, if indeed this were possible (Waever, 2005). Neither is discourse seen as merely “cheap talk” or “merely semantics”. Rather, politicians use their rhetoric strategically to provide justification for the actions that the state has taken or will take in the future for they understand that they will be held accountable by the public, challenged by political opponents, and judged by other states for their actions (Wagnsson, 2010). Public

communication provides a venue for politicians to present to both their own constituencies as well as a broader international audience a vision of the state and the impulses behind foreign policies (Larsen, 1997). In other words, the reasons that policy makers expound, both implicitly and explicitly, serve as the reasons for state action. The descriptions and explanations therefore become the meaning behind the decisions.

In considering which discourse to analyze, I was guided by Fetzer's (2013) perspectives on political discourse, which includes three categories — politics "from above", politics in the media, and politics "from below." Empirical evidence examined in this study falls in the first two of Fetzer's perspectives of political discourse. The majority of data come from mediated discourse, such as interviews, wherein politicians interact with members of the media. In these cases, politicians present their case dynamically, restating their assertions or defending their claims as a result of questions or comments from the person conducting the interview. Due to the interactive format of the discourse, these texts are preferable. However, because of limited English-language texts in German I was unable to obtain interviews for most of the years up through 2010. Nevertheless, all of the French and most of the German texts from the latter years fit into this group. Additional data come from documents that reflect the politics from above perspective. These texts come from leading politicians who communicate in a one-sided discourse such as in press releases, speeches, and declarations. Again due to the constraints of access to data, most German texts prior to 2010 fall into this category.

In addition, rhetoric originates from a number of sources. As described by Goffman (1981), discourse stems from a "principal," whose position is reflected in the text, the "author," who composes the text, and finally the "animator" who ultimately provides the text, either in

written or verbal form. In this study, empirical evidence comes from speakers in each of these categories. Frequently, individual foreign policy decision makers, such as the German Chancellor or Foreign Minister or French President or Minister of Foreign Affairs will serve as both the principal and animator of the state's policy. At the same time, each country's bureaucratic entities that support these principals serve as the "animators" of the state's policy, as commonly seen in press releases from the foreign ministries or the President's office. While there is a possibility of government speakers presenting divergent messages, I assume the discourse reflects a common position whether it originates from the President/Chancellor's office or the Foreign Ministry/Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Blunden (2000: 28-29) notes, there is "almost permanent symbiosis" between foreign policy making entities within the French government. Similarly, the potential for disagreement within German foreign policy making circles is mitigated by institutions that encourage the Chancellor and her ministers to present a united front (Rittberger, 2001: 97). Therefore, I take the official texts as accurate representations of government rhetoric as a whole, regardless of their source or their type.

Foreign policy discourse appears in a variety of forms but usually gets transformed into written texts, which serve as repositories of the discourse. Some are written versions of verbal communication such as transcripts of speeches, press conferences, or interviews. Other texts exist only in written form such as press releases or communiqués. At the same time, others represent mere summaries of proceedings such as those that record Parliamentary debates (Chilton and Schäffner, 2016). Alternatively, discourse can be captured in other media such as video and audio recordings. Regardless of the original format, the statements are typically preserved in documents, which then become the data to be analyzed through discourse analysis.

The texts examined in this study reflect both verbal and written original sources but were all reviewed in written form.

The first step in analyzing French and German foreign policy discourse is to identify the dominant theme. While aspects of each theme appear across time, one or perhaps a couple themes may present themselves more frequently than others. The temporal focus begins with individual conflict years, 2008 and 2014, as these are the years in which the specific foreign policy behaviors occur that form the basis of this research. To avoid the ‘endogeneity’ problem, whereby changes in discourse are produced by the Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine (rather than the other way around, i.e., changes in discourse representatives of changes in the explanatory factors precede change in foreign policy), I expanded the temporal span of analysis to include years preceding both interventions. As a result, the data to be analyzed includes all the years between 2003 and 2014. The former date corresponds to a time of distinct change in the relationship between both France and Germany and Russia as a result of their shared opposition to the US-led war in Iraq. The latter date carries the study through the end of the year of the Ukrainian conflict. By that point, sanctions had been implemented in several steps and the perspectives of European states were fully developed.

To convert the texts into data for assessing the alternative explanations of French and German foreign policy, I used the foreign policy theories and alternative hypotheses derived from competing theoretical perspectives to identify the main “themes” and key “terms” associated with the themes. The development of the codes was an iterative process. Beginning with theories of foreign policy and international relations I derived a set of codes based on expected indicators of foreign policy motivations (see Table 2).

While analyzing the texts, terms emerged that provided a better reflection of the discourse and therefore were added to or exchanged with the list of terms selected for the initial analysis of the texts. It is important not to employ this process too frequently as it could lead to an overabundance of terms that become so specific that they lose any value for identifying trends. At times it was necessary to apply a code that fits the discussion best even if a unique identifier seemed more appropriate. To keep track of texts and maintain data on codes, I used Atlas.Ti, a qualitative analysis software. The final list of codes with the relevant theoretical ties and descriptions that I applied to the texts appears in Table 3.

Table 2 — Initial Themes and Theories

Theoretical Link	Branch of Theory	Theme	Terms
Realism	Neorealism (balancing)	Countering the US	Balance (counter, oppose, etc.) Alliance (against US, with Russia)
	Neorealism (balancing)	Russia changing the balance of power	Power (and synonyms) National interest (Russia) Security (Russia)
	Neorealism (balance of threat)	Russia posing a threat	Threat and derivatives (to Europe, France, Germany, etc.) Aggression
	Neoclassical Realism	Security Interest(s)	Partnership/alliance (with Russia) in war on terror Cooperation to counter transnational threats
Institutionalism		EU-Russia cooperation	Multilateralism Collaboration
Liberalism	Economic liberalism	Minimize economic disruption	Trade Mutually beneficial solution Benefits of restraint EU-Ukraine trade agreement

	Economic interdependence	Energy security	Gas/oil supply European needs from Russia
Constructivism	Identity	European identity	Part of Europe Shared values Community
	International norms	Legitimacy	International law Protection of Russian nationals Human Rights Humanitarian response Sovereignty
	International Norms	Peace and stability	Restore peace Stop violence Peaceful conflict resolution
Democratic Peace	Republican liberalism	State of democracy in Russia	Democracy and derivatives Authoritarianism
	Democratic norms	Democratic norms	Democracy and derivatives Shared values Appropriate state behavior

Table 3 — Final Themes and Theories

Theoretical link	Code	Description
Neorealism	Great Power	Depictions of Russia as a Great Power, suggesting its status as a pole in the international system which would lead to behavior on its part as well as that of other states in the system.
	Polarity	Descriptions of the nature of the international system; suggesting that states act in response to changes in the distributions of capabilities within the system.
Neoclassical realism	Security	References to the role that Russia plays in regard to French, regional or global security, not from a systemic point of view but from a more absolute perspective on impacts of Russian actions.
	Energy security	Discussions about France's or Europe's need for access to energy, not from an economic point of view but from a security perspective.

	Shared Interests	Mentions of shared areas of security interest such as counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism.
Institutionalism	Multilateral cooperation	Descriptions of Russia as a partner in coordinating multinational responses to regional and global security concerns; instances where France sees Russia as cooperating with other nations toward a common end
	Multilateral disagreement	References to instances in which France and Russia have diverged in preferred policies in response to crises; issues where France sees Russia as not cooperating with the rest of the international community to provide or establish security.
Liberalism	Economic relations	Discussions of economic relations between France and Russia; highlights of economic issues
	Interdependence	References to shared interests across multiple areas including economics, finance, education, culture, science and technology.
	Liberal Democracy	Depictions of Russia as a liberal democracy; goes beyond merely democratic reforms to include progress toward a market economy and expected political freedoms.
Constructivism	Appropriate behavior	References to French expectations of Russia based on its status as a great power or a leading member of international organizations; discussions of Russia's international responsibilities
	Human rights	References to the need to take into account human rights in the conduct of interstate relations; discussions of the need for actions to maintain the rights of individuals, including the protection of non-combatants.
	Integrity	Discussions of the international norm of respecting the territorial integrity of other states; opposes actions or policies that violate a state's established boundaries
	International law	Discussions about the need to adhere to international law in the conduct of international affairs; appeals for Russia to abide by international law in its actions
	Sovereignty	References to the international norm of sovereignty; accounts of the appropriateness of respecting a state's independence

	Peaceful conflict resolution	References to the international norm of resolving international disputes without resorting to violence; calls for refraining from the use of force
Democratic peace	Democracy - positive	Descriptions of the state of Russian democracy in a positive way; discussions of progress in Russian transition from authoritarianism.
	Democracy - concern	References to a concern with the state or progress of Russian democracy; not outright condemnation but expressions of uncertainty about the Russia's commitment to western-style democracy

A couple of examples will demonstrate the application of codes to texts as well as the display of information in Atlas.Ti. First, in Figure 1 taken from an interview with Foreign Minister Steinmeier (2006), the issue of energy security clearly presents itself:

114:2 There is a very... tutions do you expect from the G8 Summit on this point?

There is a very close two-way relationship between Russia and the EU on energy matters: on the one hand, Russia is the EU's major supplier of oil and gas. On the other, the EU is the biggest buyer of Russian oil and gas. So by no means is there unilateral dependence; rather, Russia and the EU have a shared interest in extensive cooperation on energy. That is why we have a longstanding tradition of good and trusting cooperation in the energy sector, a tradition which we want to develop further. The European Council recently reaffirmed this once again.

In this context I have always taken the view that comprehensive energy security is an interest shared by producers, buyers and transit countries. We need joint principles for investment, trade and transi

There is a very d...

- S-FM
- I-Energy
- T-EnSec

Figure 1 Example Coding No. 1 (energy security)

The codes applied include one for the speaker, the foreign minister; the issue, Energy; and the theme, energy security.

A second example demonstrates how theoretically informed themes encapsulate various issues contained in the discourse. The quote shown in Figure 2 from Foreign Minister Westerwelle (2013) highlights the theme of interdependence in the context of the rest of the text:

We are also bound together by a joint st... Russia. The completion of the project of uniting Europe is not possible in the larger sense... development are only possible on our continent if Europeans and Russians work together. We are on the right path: our cooperation with Russia is now broad and multifaceted. Never before have our economies and societies been so closely intertwined.

Relations with Russia are also a key factor in security policy for NATO. Cooperation in Afghanistan and in fighting piracy and terrorism is proof that a constructive and cooperative approach in the NATO-Russia Council has positive effects on NATO's missions. We also need

W...

- T-Interdep
- I-Bilat
- S-FM

Figure 2 — Example Coding No. 2 (interdependence)

The screenshot from Atlas.Ti shows the various codes assigned to this text. The speaker is again identified as the Foreign Minister, the issue is that of bilateral relations, and the theme is interdependence, assigned as a result of the reference to “broad and multifaceted” cooperation based on both “economies and societies” being “closely intertwined.”

The segments to be coded varied in length. For example, many texts included the transcripts of interviews, which invariably start with a question and are followed by a response from the policy maker or representative. In these instances, both the question and the paragraph in responses to it comprised the “unit of analysis”. Sometimes, particularly in response to a long or multi-part question, the response consisted of multiple succeeding paragraphs, which I treated as separate segments. In the event that a multi-paragraph response addressed only one theme, I treated it as a single “unit of analysis” and counted it only once as an example of a particular theme. On rare occasions, a text would contain a terse, succinct answer containing references to several issues and a multiplicity of themes. In these cases, a single sentence was used as a coded segment. Each coded segment received a primary code in accordance with the theme it corresponded to, but was also identified according to speaker, issue, and orientation of the speech toward Russia. I chose this manner of coding in order to allow for flexibility in analyzing the data. Alternatively, I could have created a separate code for each combination of factors reflecting speaker-issue-theme-orientation but this would have led to a more cumbersome set of codes and would have made interpretation more complicated.

Analysis of French Foreign Policy Discourse

Initially I take each country as its own case study and make each a separate chapter. This chapter applies discourse analysis to relate French foreign policy rhetoric with the theoretically

possible explanations provided above. I begin by outlining the documents that record the discourse and review the issues around which the dialogue revolves. Subsequently I highlight the themes found in the rhetoric and compare their salience over time. Finally, I examine the hypotheses in light of the empirical findings.

French data sources

In order to analyze French foreign policy motivations, I relied on texts published by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on their website⁸, which offers an extensive, searchable database of foreign policy-related documents across the range of this study. However, due to the thoroughness of this database, the amount of data discovered was excessive and needed to be reduced in some manner.

The website made the initial search for data easy, although since the documents were in French I had to translate them once downloaded. Focusing on French relations with Russia, I began the search using the terms representing both the country (Russie) as well as the accompanying adjective (Russe). In addition, since heads of state and/or heads of government represent their country and its regime, I included the names of specific leaders, namely Vladimir Putin (Poutine, in French) and Sergei Medvedev as search terms. As mentioned above, in order to capture the nature of Franco-Russian relations over time, I looked for texts from 2003 to 2014.

Searching using only these terms yielded over 1500 usable results as reflected in Table 4, which was an unwieldy number. I employ the term usable because I did not include each and every document that the search returned; rather, I scanned each document to find the instance of the search terms to determine whether it related to a foreign policy issue. In a number of

⁸ <http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr>

instances, the references to Russia were not related to a foreign policy issue. For instance, Russia may have been mentioned in a discussion relating to another country, such as the United States, in a way that was irrelevant to international politics or to French relationship with Russia or one of its leaders. Upon completion I had collected a significant number of texts that offered a wide variety of perspectives.

Table 4 — Types of French texts

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Total</u>
Press Release	101	78	80	58	54	46	89	58	40	43	87	77	811
Interview	35	38	33	29	32	46	20	23	30	42	22	42	392
Press Conference	3	10	10	14	9	13	21	13	17	22	9	29	170
Declaration	5	1	1	1	12	3	5	9	6	5	4	24	76
Speech	1	2	2	7	3	8	13	6	7	2	4	2	57
Statement	4	2	2	4	6	3	1	5	0	1	0	1	29
Total	149	131	128	113	116	119	149	114	100	115	126	175	1535

To facilitate the reduction of data, I first examined the number of texts by type. All texts but the interview fit Fetzer’s (2013) categories “politics from above,” while interviews represent the category of mediated politics. As demonstrated in the Table 4, interviews and press releases formed the bulk of the texts. For both practical and theoretical reasons, I decided to rely solely on interview transcripts. While interviews represent one of the two largest categories, they are fewer in number than press releases, making the data collection task more feasible. Since a significant amount of redundancy exists between interviews and press releases, I felt that there would be no loss of fidelity in limiting the analysis to the former. Moreover, the same events form the basis of both types of documents. More importantly, the interview texts represent a

slightly different form of discourse than the press releases. As dialogical texts, they capture interaction between the speaker and the journalist, allowing for certain points to be challenged, clarified, or explored in greater detail. Finally, interviewees were government principals rather than spokespersons, which locates the discourse as close as possible to the decision-maker and better reflects their actual position.

The origins of the texts demonstrate significant variety. Given that the data came from the MFA website, it is no surprise that the primary interviewee was the Foreign Minister (83% of texts). However, other representatives of the government also made significant contributions. Presidential interviews provided almost five percent of the texts followed by the Prime Minister (4%) as well as the Secretary of State for European Affairs (3%). Other speakers such as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations and the Minister of Defense provide periodic interviews as well. Additional variety stems from the audiences for which the interviews were conducted or, more to the point, who was asking the questions. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming market for interviews was France. As likewise expected, the second-most frequent audience was Russia. Other frequent sites of interviews were the United Kingdom, Poland, and Germany. Considering Varied environments facilitates comparison of the discourse oriented toward domestic as well as external contexts, allowing for alternate perspectives on foreign policy motivations.

What did they talk about? Issues in French-Russian discourse

French and Russian interactions occurred in a variety of contexts. As globally active states, both became involved in security issues of regional and global concern. During the period under consideration (2003-2014), France and Russia had opportunities as members of multilateral fora

to influence security situations ranging from Central Asia to the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, they actively engaged each other in bilateral issues not only related to security but also to economics and other areas. Finally, given France's integration in the European Union, these countries interacted within the framework of EU-Russia relations.

While multilateral security issues dominated the focus of Franco-Russian dialogue during the period under consideration, bilateral concerns retained a regular presence. These issues came from a number of sectors across the range of state interactions, such as economics, military cooperation, cultural exchanges, and spatial cooperation. In 2002 France and Russia established the Conseil de Cooperation franco-russe sur les questions de security (Cooperation Council on Questions of Security) or CCQS for the purpose of coordinating security policies and these meetings continued annually through 2013. Similarly, the countries regularly conduct meetings of the Conseil économique, financier, industriel et commercial (CEFIC) (Economic, Finance, Industrial and Commercial Council). Regarding space, France and Russia have worked together on space launches as well as implementing Galileo, the European Global Positioning Service. While the majority of economic engagement with Russia occurs in the EU context, nevertheless the countries continued to share an interest in bilateral economic cooperation as well.

In addition to maintaining their bilateral relations, France and Russia engaged each other in a wide variety of multilateral contexts. The French remained very aware of the reality of the European Union and at times couched its discourse about Russia within a European framework. As mentioned above, a European perspective dominates economic relations with Russia. Even more, France approached energy security issues from a broader standpoint, reinforcing efforts of its EU counterparts. French efforts in this area are especially notable given the fact that France

imports relatively little hydrocarbons from Russia. On security matters, French discourse related to collective efforts on behalf of the EU as well as NATO to coordinate and cooperate with Russia. Both of these organizations had established working fora, namely the EU-Russia council and the NATO-Russia council, in pursuit of multinational coordination. More specifically, France did not directly participate in the Middle East Peace Process but rather left it to representatives from the European Union to coordinate with the other members of the “Quartet”, i.e., Russia, the United States, and the United Nations.

Over time, international events occupied the attention of leading states around the world, including France and Russia, flaring and receding in salience, and changing the focus of French discourse toward Russia along with it. As indicated in Figure 3, the primary issues related to Franco-Russian relations were: Russian democracy, energy, EU-Russian relations, the Russo-Georgian war, Iran’s nuclear program, Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) between Israel and Palestine, the civil war in Syria, and the conflict in Ukraine (including Crimea). Below I describe in greater detail the changing focus over the time span under consideration as the basis for this study.

The year 2003 brought with it increased attention to the international concern with Iraq’s WMD programs. While the United States had been preparing for war as a result of Iraq’s repeated issues of non-compliance with the UN-approved inspection regime, few European countries supported the American desire to use force to compel Iraqi compliance or remove Saddam Hussein from power. While the United Kingdom and Spain aligned themselves with the US, France, Germany and Russia formed a formidable international opposition. The problem of

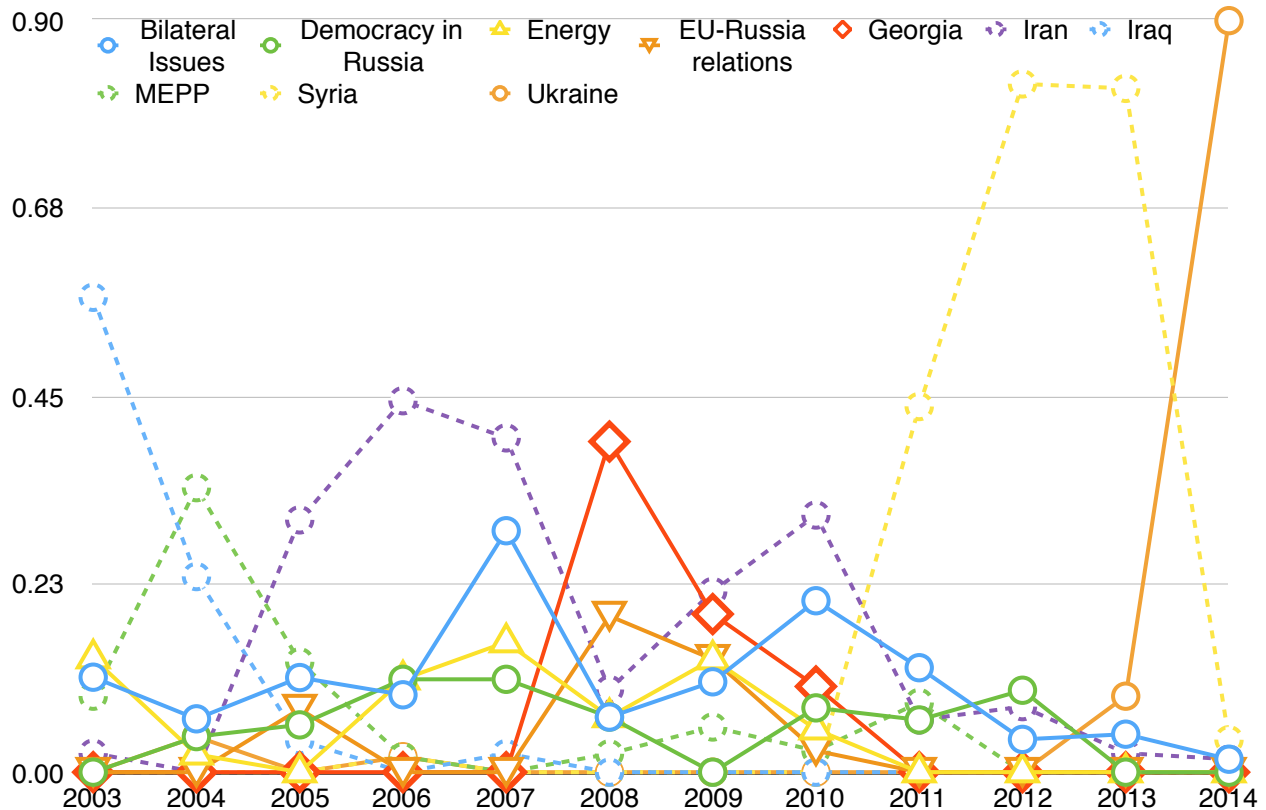


Figure 3 — French issues over time

Iraq provided an impetus for even greater cooperation between France and Russia, resulting in the overwhelming majority (25 of 44) of French statements during this year related to this issue.

The following year brought a new priority for these countries. That is not to say that Iraq was no longer an issue. Indeed, it shared the spotlight with a different set of problems—events in Israel and Palestine, or what is referred to as the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). In the interview transcripts related to Franco-Russian relations, the situation in Iraq formed approximately 23% of the discourse while the MEPP emerged in roughly 34% of the texts.

Related to both Iraq and Israel-Palestine, the Iran nuclear issue captured the attention of France and Russia once again in 2005 and kept the focus on challenges in the Middle East, which would dominate the discussion for the next several years. At this point, French discourse

contained very little about the Iraq problem, appearing in less than 4% of the quotes. Similarly, the MEPP was mentioned only in 13% of the segments. In their place, discussions of the Iranian nuclear program assumed priority, appearing in 30% of quotations. This year also brought the greatest distribution of topics as can be seen in the fact that the three primary concerns accounted for less than 50% of the discourse. During this year, bilateral issues (11%) and also appeared frequently.

In subsequent years, French rhetoric continued to focus on multilateral cooperation aiming at international solutions to the Iranian nuclear issue while other issues took the place of previous security concerns. In 2006 discussions regarding the Iranian nuclear program remained most frequent, accounting for 44% of the discourse and, while both Iraq and the MEPP almost completely disappeared as bases for international interaction. Similarly, bilateral concerns also diminished and formed only 10% of the references in the texts. At the same time, two additional issues emerged as topics of interest that would remain through the next years: energy and democracy. Dialogue related to energy concerns, the result of Russia-Ukraine disagreements, appeared in 11% of French statements, while discussions related to Russian democracy increased to a noticeable level in 2006 of 11%.

Similar emphases appeared in 2007. While declining in absolute terms in 2007, rhetoric related to Iran remained dominant at 40% of the total references. After declining the previous year, bilateral concerns became highly salient in 2007, appearing in 29% of the discourse. Despite the resolution of the gas crisis the previous year, energy issues increased in prominence to 16% of the discourse. Finally, democracy discussions continued at a noticeable level, which would be expected given the elections held in Russia that year.

The preeminent concern in the discourse of 2008 naturally became the war in Georgia but only during the latter half of the year. Moreover, its dominance lasted a relatively short time, with most of the discussion on Georgia occurring between August and October. Prior to and shortly after the conflict, French dialogue consisted of the same topics as previous years: energy, Iran, democracy, and bilateral topics. While the relative frequency of statements concerning these subjects decline due to the Russo-Georgian, the raw number of segments remained similar to the previous year with the exception of bilateral references. Similarly, discourse related to EU-Russia relations appeared frequently (19%) as a result of both the conflict as well as the fact that President Sarkozy also held the Presidency of the European Union for the latter half of the year.

Subsequent years likewise continued the overall pattern. France's rhetoric during 2009 once again focused most often on the Iran nuclear issue which accounted for only 22% of references while Georgia remained a salient topic that constituted 19% of the discourse. Both EU-Russia relations and energy concerns represented other significant bases of discussion as well during the time period, equally salient at 14%. In 2010, The subject of Iran's nuclear program again dominated French-Russian interactions, increasing to 31% of the dialogue. At the same time, previous multinational considerations such as energy and EU-Russia relations essentially disappeared. In their place, attention to the bilateral relationship resumed a significant place in the discourse (21%) while dialogue about the situation in Georgia remained noticeable at 10% of the dialogue.

Beginning in 2011, French discourse reflected a distinct turn toward reactions to various crises at the expense of European and bilateral concerns. Attention in the Middle East soon shifted from Iran to Syria, requiring the focus of both France and Russia resulting in a change

priority in their discourse. In addition, international deliberations regarding events in Libya emerged to a noticeable degree. The civil war that erupted in Syria in 2011 became the predominant issue around which Franco-Russian discourse centered for the next three years. In the first year 44% of the discourse related to Syria with bilateral interactions accounting for another 13%. Concurrently, the instability in Libya presented the only other notable topic in French dialogue with Russia, appearing in 10% of quoted segments. However, the following year, 2012, was overwhelmingly dominated by a focus on Syria as the civil war heated up and accusations of the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime drew heightened criticism from western European countries. Franco-Russian dialogue in 2012 consisted of 82% Syrian discourse while references to democracy reemerged to a noticeable level at 10% due to the Russian elections held that year. The overwhelming salience of to the Syrian conflict left little room for other topics.

Subsequent years found even greater amount of attention paid to crises, pushing out virtually every other concern. In 2013, the conflict in Syria again represented 82% of French-Russian discourse. The only other noticeable issue was related to Ukraine which constituted only 9% of the dialogue. The final year under consideration brought about the greatest salience related to a single topic as the various crises in Ukraine unfolded. Rhetoric related to them formed 90% of the French discourse in 2014, with an assortment of previously discussed areas constituting a relatively insignificant number of references, led by Syria with five quotations.

The issues that emerge from Franco-Russian dialogue generate responses from foreign policy decision makers. As discussed, the preeminent issues vary slightly over time but the relationship between France and Russia most frequently related to international crises in the

middle east to which both countries responded as outside entities. The conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine disrupted this pattern and bilateral concerns, usually an undercurrent in the discourse, occasionally gained a prominent place in the rhetoric. The way that policy makers discuss their relationship with Russia within these contexts will reveal the motivations for their actions.

In their own words: French foreign policy motivations

Building off the foundations of the previously discussed issues, I now move to examine French foreign policy discourse with an eye on the underlying motivations of their relations and responses to Russia. I will use these factors to make inferences about the considerations that inform French foreign policy choices.

Figure 4 below depicts the frequency of codes as they appeared in French texts between 2003 and 2014 corresponding to the theoretical perspectives and alternative explanations for French foreign policy outlined in chapter 2. Each category consists of the various themes that

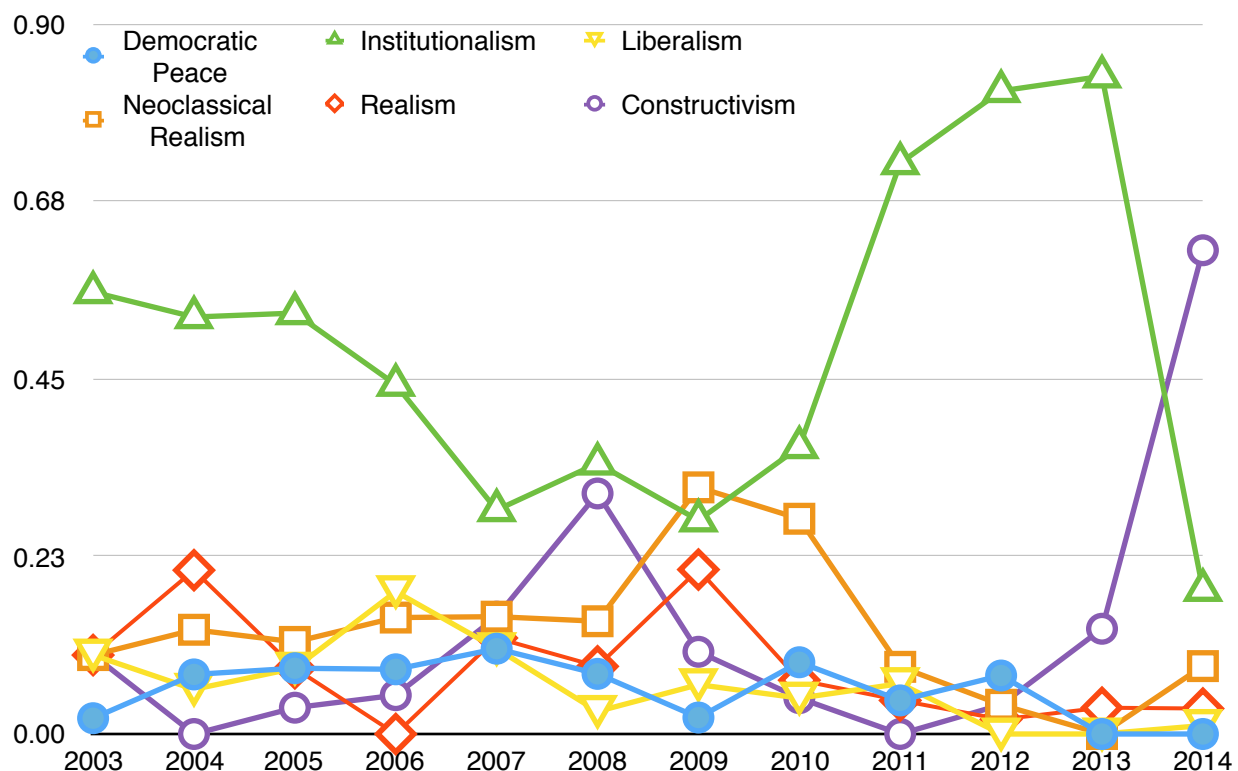


Figure 4 — Theoretical perspectives in French discourse (% total annual discourse)

relate to the overarching framework to simplify the discussion and to align them with the hypotheses. Subsequent figures will break down each viewpoint into greater detail.

Rhetoric reflecting realist considerations of systemic conditions appears at varying levels over time in French foreign policy discourse toward Russia as shown in Figure 5. In this regard, references to the polarity of the international system and the identification of relative power positions of various states (particularly Russia) demonstrate an impetus for action in light of these factors on the part of French foreign policy actors.

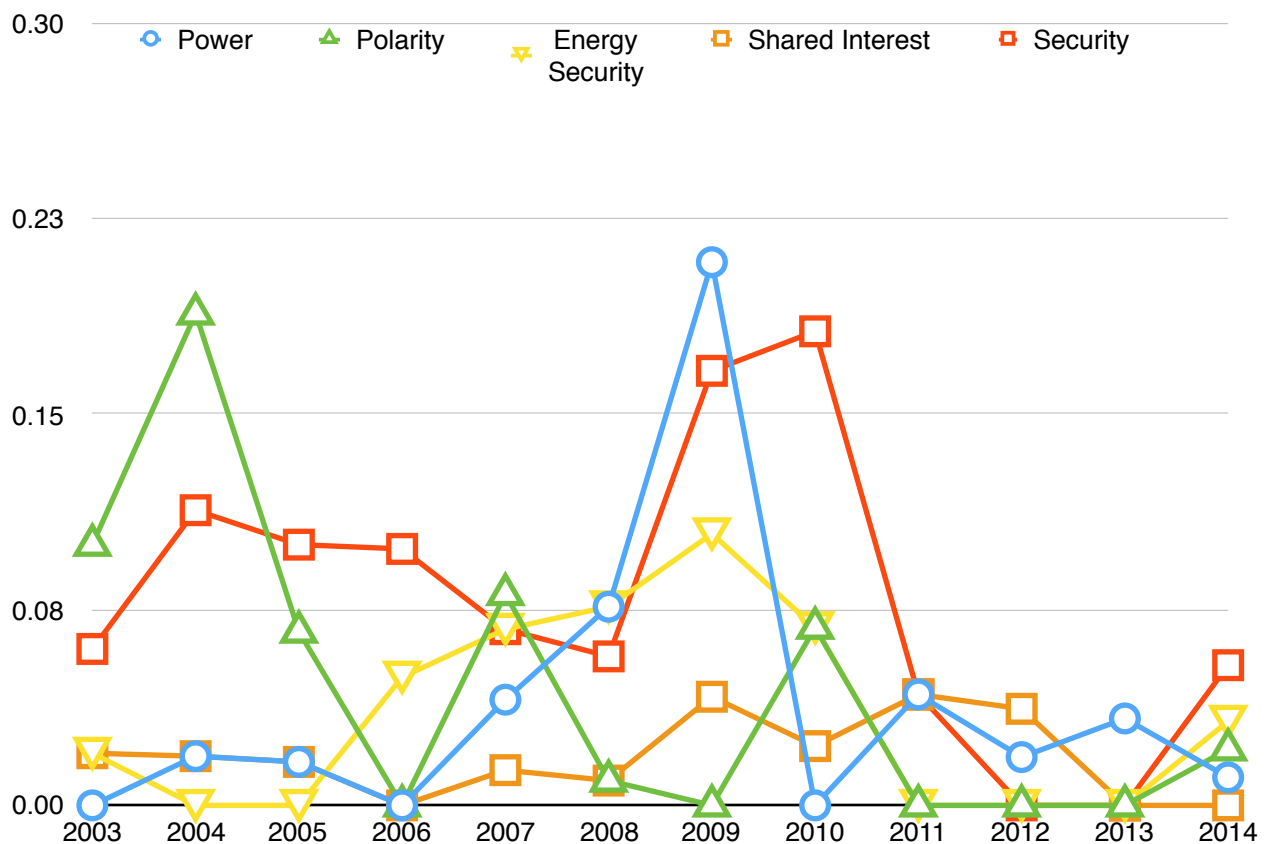


Figure 5 — Realist themes found in French discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

For most of the period covered in this study, French discussions contained few references to Russia as a great power. Nevertheless, they appeared consistently over time and the dialogue never demonstrated a concern stemming from Russia's position in the system. Michel Barnier,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, offered his perspective on Lithuanian TV in 2005: “Russia is a very great country...It is a great country and a great people, a great world power.” (2005b) This discourse increased in the years surrounding the Georgia conflict, peaking in 2009 and dominating all other realist concerns that year. Following the G8 summit in 2007, discussing the lack of consensus among United Nations Security Council members, President Sarkozy remarked, “I believe in the role of Russia. Russia is a great power...” (2007). And again in 2010, he commented, “I have never been one of those who fears the emergence of new powers such as China, India, Russia or even Brazil. I believe on the contrary that [their] development...is an opportunity for the world.” (2010)

Alongside the discussions of power, French public statements portrayed support and respect for Russia’s role in creating an alternate center of power in the international system apart from the US. French concern with systemic polarity ebbed and flowed over time with uncertainties to specific issues, although, in general, as time passed French references to the Russian impact on the distribution of power in the system declined. Early on in the time period under investigation, France frequently mentioned the change in the polarity of the international system, which became the most prominent realist discourse in 2004 and 2007. Moreover, this change was welcomed on their part as they advocated for a multipolar system to replace what they saw as a unipolar system dominated by the United States. A new distribution of power would include regional powers such as China and Brazil as well as Europe and Russia as described by the French prime minister in February, 2003:

“The world cannot rest on the support of only one power. The world needs different poles of stability. We need a multipolar world. And Europe constitutes, without a doubt, along

with the United States, the most important pole of stability, able to provide direction. In order to work well, it is necessary to walk on two legs and we see in this the role that China, Russia, and many other regions of the world play. (De Villepin, 2003a)

This statement reflects the opposition that France along with Russia (and Germany) displayed toward the American moves toward military action in Iraq. In 2005, when asked if it were necessary to counter the dominance of the United States, the French foreign minister Barnier rejected framing his discussions in that manner, although he acknowledged the existence or emergence of additional world powers.

Q - Is it necessary to balance against American power?

R - I am not looking to...promote the European project against the United States or in a sort of rivalry with the United States, who are our allies and who are the premier power in the world but who will not eternally be the only global power. There are other powers who are continent-state powers as well such as China or Russia, very near to us..." (Barnier, 2004a)

French policy makers regularly reinforced their support for a multipolar world, specifically supporting the notion of Russia as a necessary pole in the system.

"I believe it is in the fundamental interest of global stability, as well as the stability of our region [Europe], that the European Union and Russia, two great bodies, two essential elements of the multipolar world of today." (Chirac, 2005)

While the discourse appeared less frequently in subsequent years, future policy makers continued to advance this perspective. In 2007, rhetoric reflecting Russia as a pole in the system emerged frequently. As Foreign Minister Kouchner commented to a Russian newspaper, "It is

necessary to understand what is this great country, for Russia is a great country, and the role that you play in the world” (Kouchner, 2007b). This reference not only to the country’s greatness but also its place in the world highlights the French view of Russia as a major global actor. However, the rhetoric changed toward the end of the time period examined with discussions about polarity completely disappearing from 2011 onward. In 2014, France no longer specifically encouraged movement toward multipolarity but rather seemed concerned with a lack of strength in any particular pole. Rather than expressing a vision of multipolarity, Laurent Fabius, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, lamented the existence of a ‘non-polar’ world where no country, or even a group of countries, was able to solve the crises of the day. “Today, in a world that has become ‘zero-polar’, no state or group of states [including Russia] can succeed in stabilizing crises” (Fabius, 2014c).

French rhetoric also shows evidence of neoclassical concerns, namely, other concerns that mitigate reactions to systemic changes. Rather than seeing Russia as a threat to European stability either as a result of increased capability or aggressiveness, French foreign policy makers considered Russia to be a necessary partner in achieving their goals related to regional and global security as well as a necessary aid in protecting certain shared interests. Moreover, France remained deeply aware of the impact that negative interactions with Russia could have on European energy security. Figure 3 displays the variations in these focus areas over time.

While the principle security concerns of the early 2000s focused on the Middle East and North Africa, French rhetoric nonetheless routinely highlighted the critical role that Russia played in maintaining peace and security in Europe itself. Dialogue of this nature appeared regularly between 2003 and 2008 and peaked in 2009. Prime minister Bernard Kouchner

remarked in 2005, “France firmly desires the creation of a strategic partnership between the European Union and Russia. It will guarantee us economic development and stability of our continent” (2005). A similar discourse manifests itself with regard to Russia’s contributions to global security. Just prior to assuming his role as President of the European Union, Nicolas Sarkozy commented, “The world has much to gain from a deeper and more systematic cooperation between Europe and Russia, notably in matters of defense and security...” (2007). Prime minister Bernard Kouchner emphasized the essential role of Russia in regional peace, stating “We must first of all meet with Russia in order to stabilize permanently the Balkans and relations with Ukraine” (2009b). Furthermore, he noted in an interview with the Russian newspaper specifically regarding a visit to Chad to observe EU operations,

I was able to note at one point the helicopters provided to the European Union by Russia having contributed to [the mission’s] success. This operation is an example of the type of concrete cooperation in the security domain that is necessary to develop between Europe and Russia. (Kouchner, 2009a)

In addition, France shared other security concerns with Russia such as counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation, which found their way into their discourse, minimally in most years but noticeably in 2011 and 2012. Prime Minister Bernard Kouchner mentioned with regard to Iran:

With Russia and China, we are going to bring a text to the Security Council that will become, I hope, a United Nations resolution; a binding resolution but also a resolution to open up dialogue with Iran. In this we have a common interest with Russia. (2008a)

The conflict in Georgia did nothing to alter French perspective on Russia’s positive contributions in the realm of security. On the contrary, French rhetorical support for cooperation

with Russia increased in 2009. Prime Minister Alain Juppé articulated the French perspective: “Russian or French, we are all confronted with the same challenges and threats in an evolving world. How to improve global governance, how to combat terrorism, proliferation, and illicit traffic...such are the true questions presenting themselves” (2011b). However, as with other security concerns, this discourse went dormant for a period of time (2012-2013) but slightly reemerged in the context of the events in Ukraine.

Energy security followed a slightly different trajectory, peaking in 2009 before disappearing, only to reemerge in 2014 at a much lower level and from a different angle. The discourse prior to 2012 focused in the need to cooperate with Russia given their status as the primary supplier of gas to Europe. Following intergovernmental talks in 2003, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin described French-Russian energy cooperation, “Following the state visit of President Putin in February 2003, our two countries adopted a joint declaration on energy, and my coming to Moscow has to do with the priority issue of our bilateral energy cooperation” (2003). Gas crises in both 2006 and 2009 raised the salience of this issue. At the end of 2009, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche, revealed the French perspective on the role that Russia played in European energy security:

[I]t is necessary to work together in order to multiply the links with Ukraine and reduce tensions with the Russians, obviously in the matter of gas. We must be conscious of the potential risks for Europe in the matter of energy dependence and, from this perspective, it is necessary to develop new relations with Russia...” (2009)

Despite EU actions to increase energy security following previous crises, in 2014 the French focus shifted from seeking cooperation with Russia to finding an alternate source to

Russian gas in order to reduce the European vulnerability to Russia. Laurent Fabius noted the need for the European Union to take lessons from the events in Crimea. Citing European dependence on Russian gas, he asserted,

We must reduce our dependence [on Russian gas] and together create a European energy strategy. For example, if we diversify our energy sources, if we group our purchases to obtain the best price, this will be positive for our households and our businesses. This is the politics that we must put forward. (Fabius, 2014b)

Moving away from realist foundations, I next examine the prevalence of institutional discourse. As demonstrated in the previous section, opportunities for multilateral action abounded as the corresponding level of dialogue reflects (Figure 6).

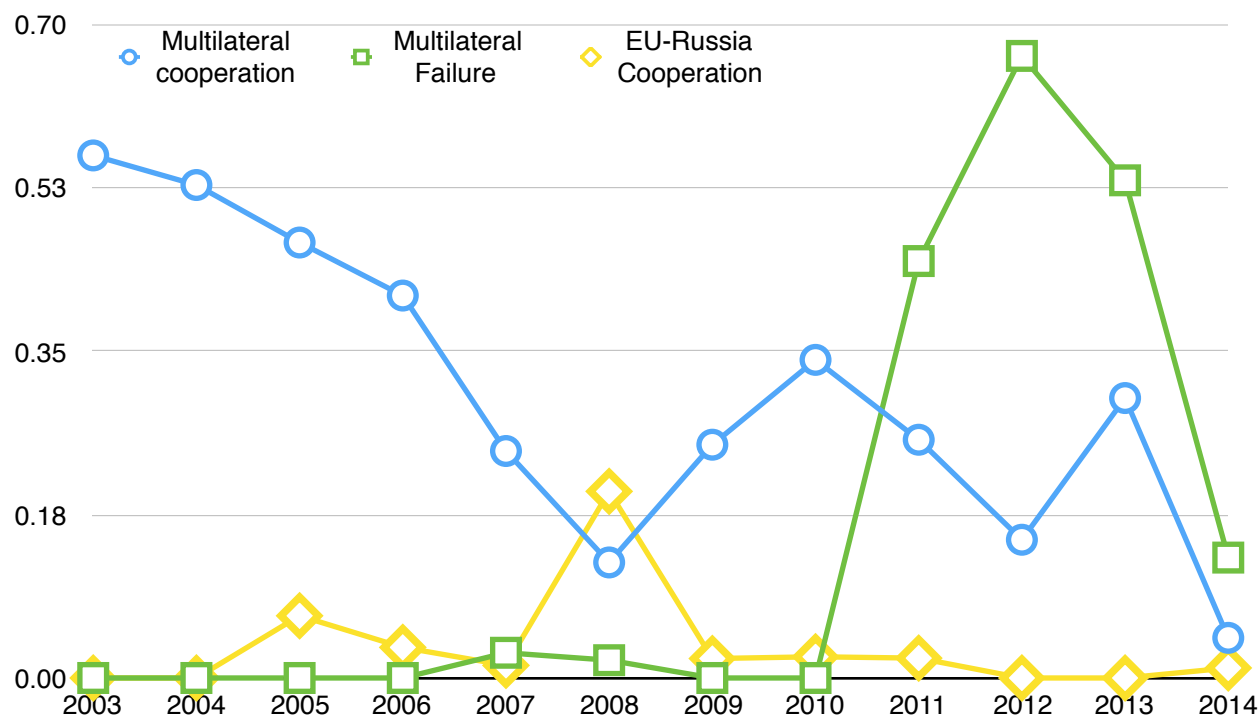


Figure 6 — Institutionalism themes in French discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

With the exception of the years of Russian interventions (2008 and 2014), discussions related to multilateralism dominated French discourse in terms of raw numbers of references. In

the periods of greatest international disagreements multilateral rhetoric constituted an inordinate amount of the overall French foreign policy statements. More specifically, in 2003 this topic was found in 70% of French discussions related to Russia while in 2013 the number increased to 86%. At the same time, the raw numbers do not reflect the nature of Franco-Russian relations from a multilateral context. This total masks the change in tone over time with respect to French and Russian interactions, ignoring the fact that over time the French orientation changed from praise for collaboration to frustration with lack of cooperation.

As discussed above, several crises across the Middle East drew attention of most international actors, including France and Russia. Related to these events, French foreign policy makers depicted Russia as a critical partner in resolving most of these situations, including the UN efforts to halt or prevent Iraq's WMD program and Iran's nuclear development. In the years 2003-2006, the French discourse clearly depicted Russia as a partner in multilateral solutions. Early evidence of cooperation came in regard to dealing with Iraq's WMD program.

Close to 90% of the people of the world share the sentiment that force can be used only as the last resort. Have we tried everything in Iraq? We think no. This is why we have made the proposals in the memorandum [concerning a new inspection regime], in coordination with the Russians and the Germans...in order to allow the international community to have a tool against the risk of proliferation... (de Villepin, 2003b)

The rhetoric of French policy makers with respect to the Iranian crisis depicted a similar attitude, as demonstrated by Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy:

If the international community is united, China and Russia with us, [Iran will be isolated].

In my opinion, this is the solution to the conflict. If, inversely, the Chinese and the

Russians, the international community are not united, this would represent an exemplary freedom for the Iranians to continue, for they are looking for divisions among the international community. (2006a)

At the same time, while delegating their own involvement in the MEPP to the EU, France continually portrayed Russia as a key player in the Quartet which was working toward peace between Israel and the Palestinians. State Minister for European Affairs Noelle Lenoir noted,

We think that the way to peace cannot be one of military rule. That is the reason for which we ardently wish a restart of the Roadmap, which is not Europe's but which is that of the Quartet - Russia, the United Nations, the United States and Europe. That is the only way. (2004)

After being overtaken by other issues, concern over the MEPP again emerged to minimal level of attention in 2011. Regarding the possibility of a Palestinian state, a French official commented, "we wish that the so-called Quartet, that is to say the Americans, the Russians, the United Nations would ask their partners to return to the table for discussions." (Juppé, 2011a).

The years 2007-2010, showed a decline in multilateral rhetoric, although no concern or opposition to Russian efforts in the this context arose, despite the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. As seen in regard to other themes, this conflict does not seem to have inordinately affected French attitudes toward Russia. French rhetoric pertaining to the crisis in Libya also acknowledged the role played by Russia in addressing the situation in Libya as seen in the description of international reactions to an arms embargo, travel restrictions, and especially trial before the international criminal court:

This has never happened before in international diplomacy. China agrees, Russia has agreed, the United States has agreed, the countries of the European Union have agreed. Therefore, this signifies that today Khadafi is under a mandate of the international criminal court where he will realize what he is doing (i.e., violating the rights of his citizens). (Wauquiez, 2011)

However, French orientation toward Russia changed dramatically beginning in 2011 as clear differences with respect to handling the Syrian crisis arose. While still seeking solutions in a collaborative manner, France became much more confrontational toward Russia between 2011-2013 with a significant overall negative trend in the rhetoric that never recovered. Their frustration with Russia's unwillingness to compromise or embrace coordinated resolution appeared in statements such as this by Foreign Minister Alain Juppé: "It is unfortunate that we have not managed to reach a majority in the Security Council; Russia and China have vetoed a resolution, however modest, that merely asks the Syrian regime to cease its repression." (2011c) The second Russian intervention into Crimea in 2014 elicited fewer reactions from a multilateral perspective than issues in Syria. As discussed below, other issues came to the fore during that conflict.

Rhetoric reflecting liberal explanations of foreign policy are based on the preferences of powerful domestic actors such as ideologically-minded interest groups, economic concerns, and/or political elites. In the texts, discourse reflecting these interests appears as discussions of interstate trade, multifaceted interdependence, and Russia's transition to a modern, liberal state, as shown in Figure 7. When combined, liberal topics formed a noticeable proportion of the

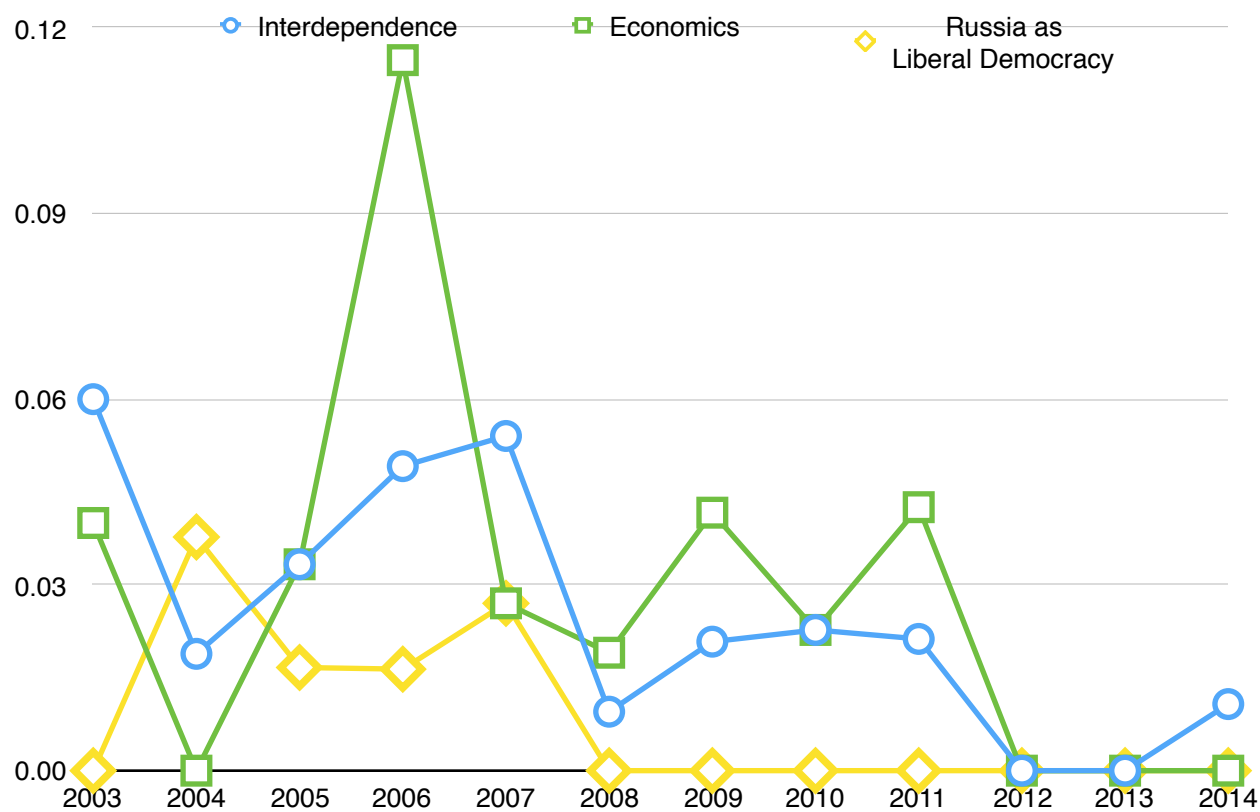


Figure 7 — Liberal themes in French discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

discussions during the first half of the years examined but decreased to a trickle by the latter years considered. Subsequently, rhetoric reflecting liberal themes trailed all or most others.

As major trading partners, France and Russia could be expected to cooperate to avoid losses associated with the disruption of economic ties. French rhetoric demonstrates an interest over time in their economic relationship with Russia and highlights their desire to promote trade and economic development between them. The most frequent references to bilateral economic relations came in 2006, when discourse reflecting liberal perspectives formed 19% of the quotations, second only to multilateralism. Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin responded to questions about economic ties between France and Russia by saying, “Our presence in Russia is

important, with 400 companies set up, existing partnerships, and some model operations.” (2006) Later that year, in discussing the state of democracy in Russia, Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy encouraged patience and reminded his audience that Russia “plays a major role in our economic plan today.” In the same interview, he commented, “with [economic] powers such as Russia...we clearly have an interest in opening up our trade and our market economy...” (2006) This discourse maintained a noticeable presence through 2011 before completely disappearing beginning in 2012.

Similarly, rhetoric related to interdependence based on multiple areas of cooperation, such as joint interests in space, communications, transportation, military materiel, and cultural exchanges, maintained a noticeable presence in the early years of this study before declining and eventually disappearing in the most recent time periods. After steadily increasing beginning in 2004, discourse related to interdependence peaked in 2007. Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy summed up the French perspective in an interview with Russian media outlet ITAR-TASS: “Beyond energy and aviation, we have many other major cooperation projects: ...digital television, transport infrastructures (toll roads), and railways (high-speed trains).” (2007) Later that year, President Sarkozy, again before a Russian audience, praised Franco-Russian collaboration across multiple sectors, including launching Russian rockets from the French launch pad in Guyana and the joint production of the Sukoi superjet 100, highlighting that it “opens investment opportunities for French companies in Russia, but also opens them for Russian companies in France.” (2007) While France and Russia continued to work together in these areas, rhetoric related to interdependence appeared very infrequently from 2008 onward and disappeared completely in 2012 and 2013.

French discourse also included references to Russia's modernization or transition to a liberal democracy. While containing rhetoric related to Russian domestic politics, these texts explicitly incorporate multiple aspects of liberalism, specifically pointing to the combination of political and economic changes in Russia. As seen in the discussions reflecting other liberal themes, French statements from this perspective appear in early years before disappearing entirely. Foreign Minister de Villepin noted

[Russia] is a country in transition, that has known in recent years...an extremely considerable evolution...in the sense of opening, of putting in place a democratic system, of reform. Per capita income has increased, an overhaul of the law has been undertaken, the economy was liberalized and opened to the outside. (2004)

At the same time, constructivist explanations of French foreign policy based on domestic characteristics such as culture or values or the influence of international norms also find support in the texts. As seen regarding previous theoretical approaches, the discourse reveals regular reference to themes associated with this approach, as shown in Figure 8.

While rhetoric reflecting the influence of internationally accepted state action abounds, references to the idea of identity appears infrequently, however, in the rhetoric. Explicit references to a sense of shared traits are rare. In response a question about "where Europe ends" in the context of EU enlargement in 2003, Minister of European Affairs Noelle Lenoir comments that Russia is "obviously European, but not a candidate [for the EU]" (2003). In 2008, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner similarly clearly identified Russia as part of Europe. In a discussion with a Russian newspaper concerning emerging economies, he made a clear distinction between countries such as Brazil and India, nations with no history of modernization, and Russia, a

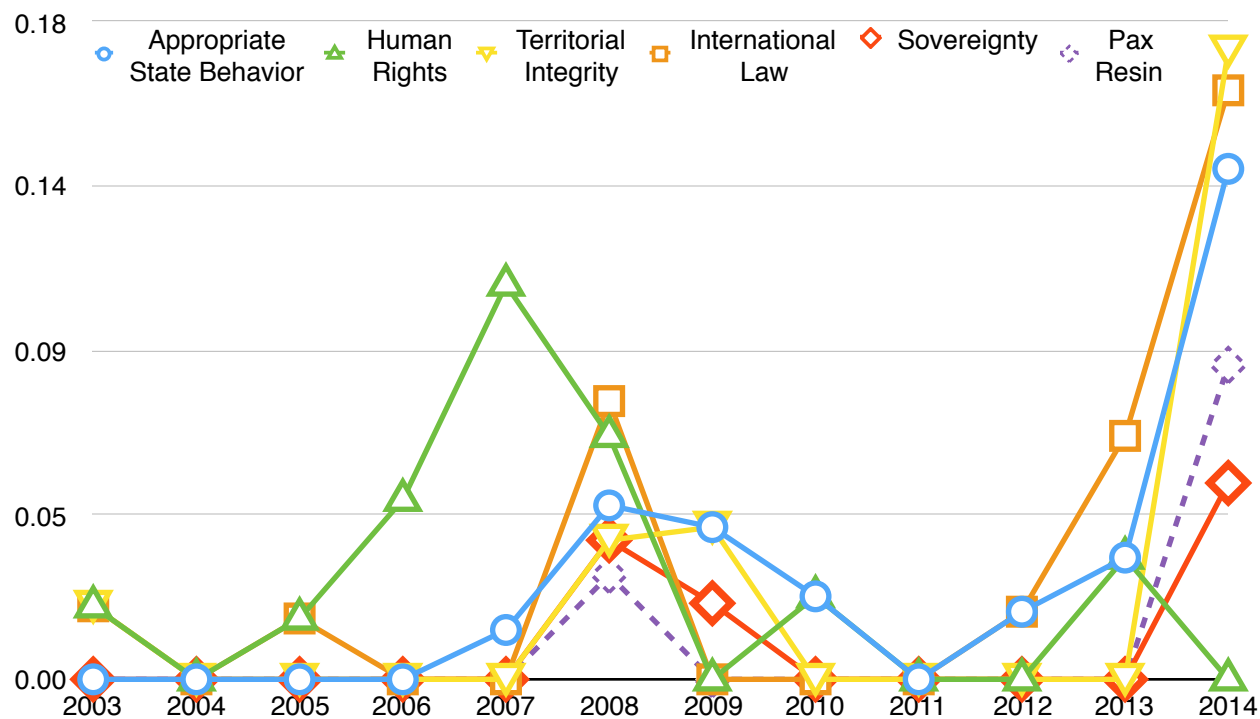


Figure 8 — Constructivist themes in French discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

country that forms part of the developed world but also “has another history, that is, as a European country” (2008b). Of note, each explicit reference to Russia’s identity occurred prior to its intervention in Georgia in 2008. Subsequent to that time, no discussion of this idea appears in any text, although the tacit difference remains. Some discourse revealed in the texts shows a hesitancy on the part of French policy makers to include Russia in “Europe”, reinforcing the notion that French policy makers see Russia as distinctly different. For example, when discussing EU enlargement, the French Minister of State for European Affairs noted, “today we [the EU] have a vision [of Europe] that does not permit us to include in this perspective for the long term Ukraine, Moldova, Byelorussia or Russia or the countries of the Caucasus” (2007). Similarly, an implicit characterization of Russia as something other than European pervades the dialogue. As much as French policy makers desire to cooperate with Russia on a host of matters,

the discourse demonstrates a clear separation between Russia and western European countries. The rhetoric reflects Russian cooperation with “Europe”, but is not part of Europe itself.

Another constructivist perspective accounts for French foreign policy by looking at the international norms defining expectations for certain kinds of actions from states with a given identity. French policy makers expected Russia, as a great power, to adhere to accepted standards of behavior such as the maintenance of human rights and conforming to international law. The texts reveal a striking rarity of references to normative concerns for the majority of the time under consideration, with the exception of human rights discussions. Alternatively, during the conflict years, rhetoric reflecting other normative considerations such as international law, state sovereignty and integrity, and the responsibilities incumbent upon being a great power appear in great numbers.

The pattern of human rights discussions differs from appearances of other ideational concerns in that they appear in response to issues beyond Russian interventions. Prior to 2006, human rights dialogue appears infrequently in the discourse; however, references increased in 2006 and peaked in 2007 based on concerns about the Russian treatment of opposition figures and reactions to violence in Chechnya. Responding to a question regarding upcoming meetings with his counterpart in Moscow, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner insisted that he would certainly bring up human rights issues. “The question of human rights, that with respect to the law of property or freedom of the press seems to us particularly concerning.” (2007a) he noted. Human rights rhetoric remained prominent in 2008, equally split between the occurrences pre- and post-war. While the discourse for most of the year continued to focus on internal Russian political issues, the dialogue emerging from the Russo-Georgian war focused exclusively on

meeting the needs of the affected civilian population within Georgia. In the midst of the conflict, Foreign Minister Kouchner asserted, “It is necessary to stop the bombardments of the civilian population. We must tell the Russian that it is not possible to continue in this way [i.e. bombing civilians]” (2008c). In the years following, human rights rhetoric essentially disappears, with only a few references related to the humanitarian situation in Syria in 2013 and none pertaining to Ukraine in the following year.

Discourse based on other normative concerns such as international law, territorial integrity, and sovereignty appeared almost exclusively in relation to Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine. References to international law shared the top spot in 2008 with human rights dialogue. Jean-Pierre Jouyet, the Minister of State for European Affairs, argued “this Russian decision [to invade Georgia] constitutes a violation of the fundamental principles of international law...” (2008). While not the most prominent in 2014, this perspective appeared frequently, reflecting similar concerns as before: “there are things that we cannot allow. That a country puts its hands on a region of another country, as happened in Crimea, is totally contrary to international law” (Fabius, 2014b).

Concerns about territorial integrity likewise constituted a significant portion of the rhetoric in these years, appearing slightly less often than international law in 2008 before becoming the most salient perspective in 2014. In response to questions about the French perspective regarding the situation in Georgia, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner commented, “all the member states of the European Union are committed to the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Georgia, and moreover, all the members of the international community must respect it” (2008d). Similar discussions appear early in 2009 as well due to the continuing effects

of the war in Georgia. In the later conflict, the discourse demonstrated the same concern, as expressed by Laurent Fabius, the Minister of Foreign Affairs: “our attitude throughout this crisis has been to stand firm [against Russia], because we cannot accept that the integrity of a country, in this case Ukraine, is flouted” (2014a).

A similar pattern appeared in discussions about the responsibilities incumbent upon Russia as a member of the international community namely what kind of behavior is appropriate for a major power to exhibit. While never specifically articulated, the following expectations appear through the discourse: states should fulfill commitments, notably terms of mutually agreed-upon cease fires; 2) states should promote justice and abide by the rule of law (particularly relevant to the MH17 investigation); and 3) states should not intervene in the domestic affairs of other states. Much of the rhetoric subsequent to the negotiated cease-fire in August 2008 centered around the expectation that Russia should fulfill its agreed-upon withdrawal of troops from Georgia. As Bernard Kouchner commented to a Polish audience in September, “Russia must understand that it must respect its commitments and its responsibilities.” (2008e) This attitude emerged in 2014 as well. When questioned concerning the sale of the French ship *Mistral* to Russia, the Secretary of State for European Affairs claimed that the sale remained contingent on “a certain number of Russian responsibilities” (Désir, 2014) related to the investigation of the crash of Malaysian Airline flight MH17 and the management of the crisis in Ukraine. In addition to expectations that Russia would fulfill its obligations, French policy makers portrayed Russian actions as contrary to the accepted international standard of non-intervention. Regarding the Ukrainian crisis, the French foreign minister clearly demonstrated the French perspective: “When a country sends military forces into another country

without permission and even contrary to the desires of the other country, it is called an intervention and obviously this is not acceptable” (Fabius, 2014f).

Closely related to discussions about international law and territorial integrity, rhetoric concerning the need to maintain the norm of state sovereignty also appeared with respect to Russian interventions. While noticeable, these references were not as frequent as the previous themes. Nevertheless, they reinforce the general attention to normative issues. In response to the Russo-Georgian war, Jean-Pierre Jouyet, the Secretary of State for European Affairs, asserted “This Russian decision constitutes a violation of [Georgian] sovereignty.” (2008) Subsequently, in 2014 Prime Minister Laurent Fabius similarly argued, “we must obviously say, in particular to the Russians, that the sovereignty of each country must be respected. We respect Russian sovereignty; the Russians must respect Ukrainian sovereignty.” (2014d)

Lastly, French foreign policy makers’ statements regularly reflected a concern with peaceful conflict resolution. While various perspectives support support this goal, French rhetoric reflects a normative bias, meaning that their foreign policy decision makers believe that violence is an inappropriate means of dealing with disagreements. In its place, politics and diplomacy represent the acceptable means of overcoming differences. This theme appeared only once in 2008 but more frequently in 2014. With respect to the conflict in Georgia, French policy makers insisted on stopping the war in order to focus on political solutions as the then-Minister of Foreign Affairs commented that he and President Sarkozy had been working daily “with our European partners, the United States as well as with Russia and Georgia, to determine a common strategy to convince the Georgian authorities and the leaders of South Ossetia to return to the path of negotiations,” blaming the conflict on the inability of the parties to reach a way out of the

frozen conflict and preferring to increase tensions and resort to violence” (Kouchner, 2008d). In other words, the dialogue contrasts the use of force currently being employed with diplomacy and negotiation as an acceptable means of resolving differences. Similar rhetoric appeared in 2014. French discourse repeatedly highlighted the need for discussion and political solutions to the conflict in Ukraine. Harlem Désir succinctly depicted France’s position with respect to Ukraine: “This has been the French attitude from the beginning: firmness and dialogue in order to find a political solution” (2014).

Lastly, with regard to the final theoretical approach, references to democracy appeared regularly in French discourse with respect to Russia, as Figure 9 illustrates. This issue comprised a substantial yet never dominant place in the concerns of French policy makers.

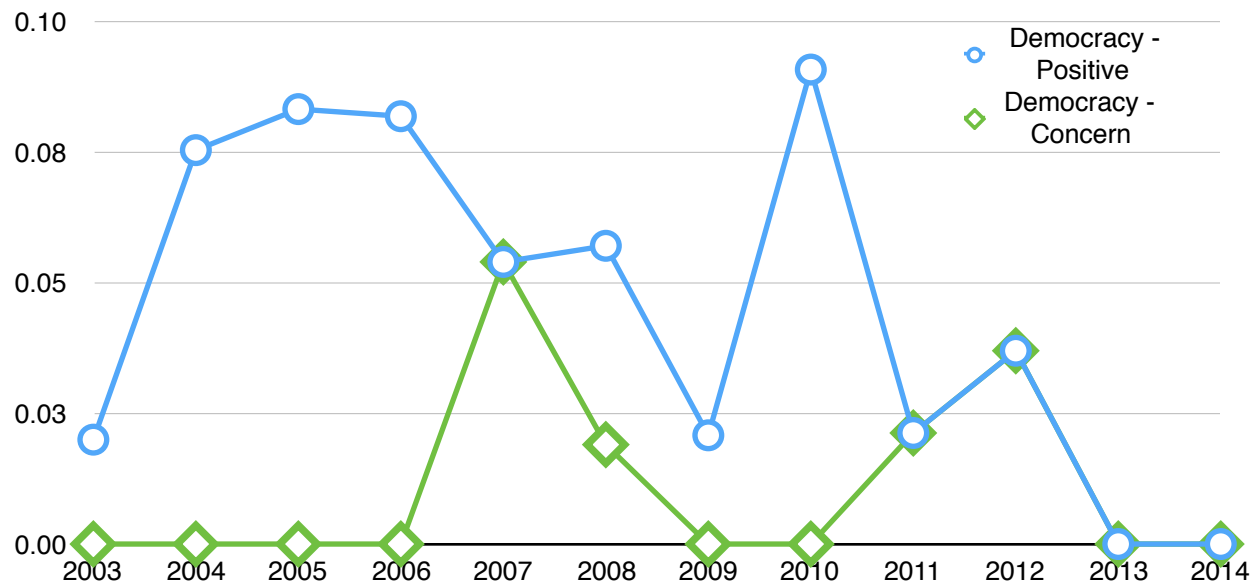


Figure 9 — Democracy themes in French discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

In the early years considered in this study, the French frequently expressed their support for the current state or the trajectory of Russian democracy, suggesting either that Russia was already a democracy or was on its way to becoming one. In 2004, French Foreign Minister

Dominique de Villepin was asked whether he considered Putin a true democrat and leader of democratization. He responded, “I am convinced that his engagement in reform and democracy is sincere. I think that today he is without doubt the man best placed in Russia to advance the process of democratization.” (2004) Subsequent Foreign Ministers conveyed the same sentiment. When asked to classify the Russian regime following the elections of 2007, Bernard Kouchner firmly asserted, “it is a parliamentary regime” (2008a). Significant support for Russian democracy occurred in 2008; however, all but one reference in that year occurred prior to the Russo-Georgian war in August. This is not surprising given that Russian elections took place in December 2007 so the increase in dialogue in 2008 merely reflects the interest in French reactions to that event. French support for the state of Russian democracy reached its peak in 2010. Addressing concerns about the sale of the helicopter carrier *Mistral* to Russia, Bernard Kouchner tried to allay the fears that it might be used aggressively against its neighbors, noting the evolution of Russian democracy. “The current movement is a democratic movement...” (Kouchner, 2010) he argued, implying pacific effects of liberal representative domestic politics. At the same time, the Russia elections of 2012 yielded no positive reaction from French foreign policy makers.

On the other side of the coin, French rhetoric also contained periodic criticisms or expressions of concern with Russian democracy. In 2007, following Russian elections, the Secretary of State for European Affairs highlighted accusations of “irregularities” in the Russian polls and noted at one point “There is progress to be made” and the following day “there is certain room for improvement, to be diplomatic” (Jouyet, 2007). Similar dissatisfaction emerged again following the subsequent round of Russian elections in 2012. In a similar effort to

euphemize, Alain Juppé reflected that “the election was not exemplary;” the best that he could come up with was that, while there were tensions, there was no brutal repression (Juppé, 2012a)—not an especially affirming assertion. In another interview a couple days later, he further noted that “the elections were held under questionable conditions” (2012b)

Preeminent discourses — tracing the most salient French rhetoric over time

As illustrated above, the discourse reflecting the various theoretical perspectives appear to various degrees across the time period examined. Having looked at the issues and the trends of theoretically-derived themes over time, I now compare their salience over time by looking at the frequency of specific issues per year, which serves as the foundation for considering specifically the motivations behind particular French actions in response to Russian interventions in Georgia and Ukraine. Figure 10 provides an overview of the number of references annually by category. While multilateralist themes reflecting an institutionalist explanation dominated in most years, rhetoric evincing each of the theoretical perspectives likewise appears across the range of years examined.

The years before Russian intervention in Georgia contain a dominant presence of discourse reflecting the institutionalist perspective connected to attempts to solve various crises in the Middle East. French rhetoric clearly establishes a preference for coordinated international action through both formal and informal institutions. In 2003 France focused on problems in both Iraq and Palestine/Israel. The multilateral concentration continued in future years primarily based on Iranian nuclear activities. In 2003 and 2004 both realist perspectives appeared in significant amounts of the discourse which suggests a lingering influence of the conflict over how to respond in Iraq. Discourse related to polarity reflects the defense of French opposition to

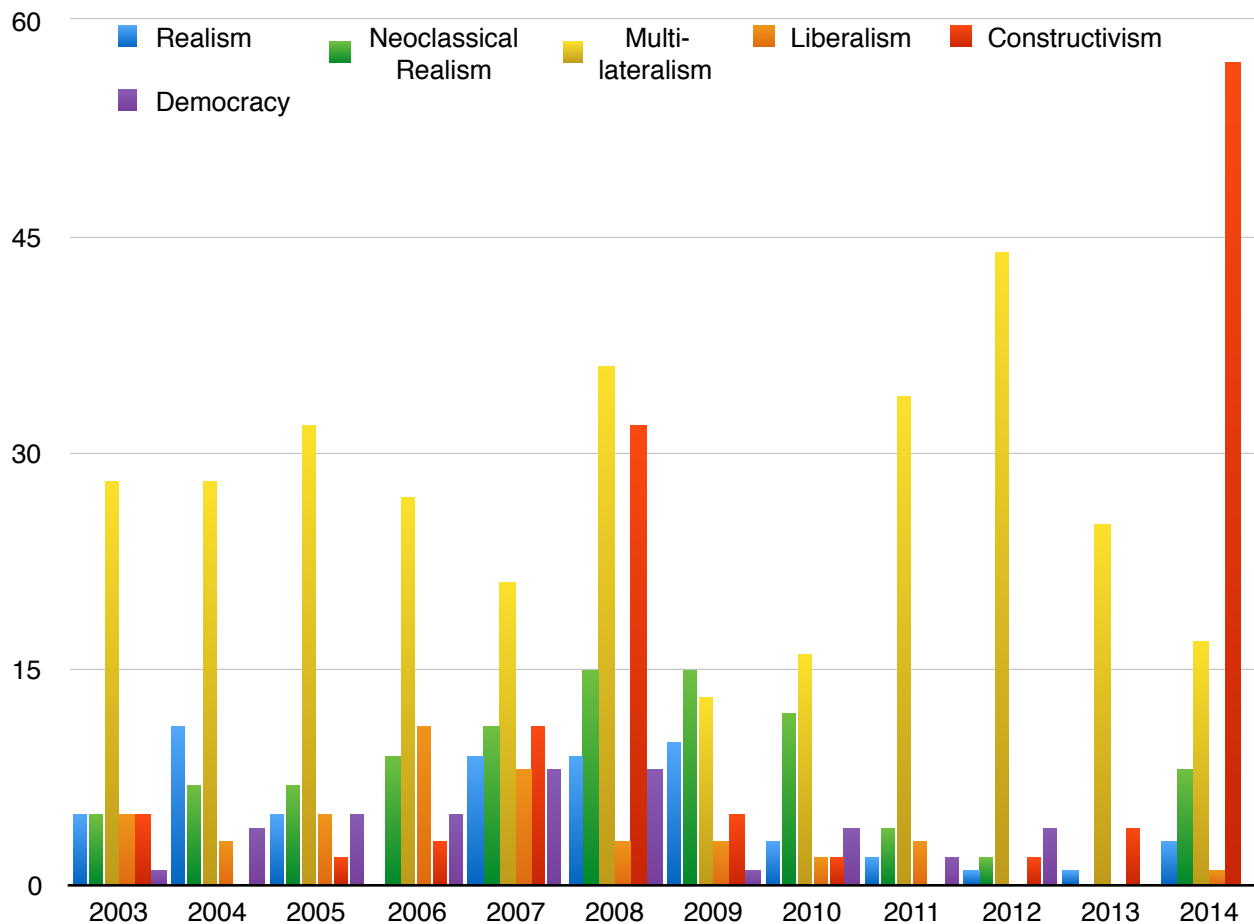


Figure 10 — French themes over time (% total annual discourse)

the US and alignment with Russia (and Germany) as suggested by neorealist theory. At the same time, dialogue reflecting liberal concerns appears as often as realist discussions in 2003 lending credence to explanations that focus on interdependence. In this case, France and Russia demonstrate mutual dependence in areas of economy, security, and energy among others. Furthermore, constructivist rhetoric appeared as frequently, related to a number of disconnected topics before disappearing completely in 2004. The subject of democracy was completely absent in 2003 before emerging at a moderate level in 2004.

As the focus of Russia-France relations shifted from Iraq to Iran and the MEPP in 2005, the preeminent discourse remained while some issues decreased in frequency. The continued

overwhelming focus on multilateral cooperation reinforces the institutionalist expectations. Neoclassical realist rhetoric became slightly more salient as French policy makers expressed support for Russia as a positive force in maintaining regional and global security. While the discussions in 2006 again reflected a focus on finding multilateral solutions to the Iranian nuclear issue, French policy makers dialogue related to liberal perspectives such as bilateral economic relations increased. Based primarily on energy issues, evidence of neoclassical realist perspectives remains noticeable. At the same time, references to systemic considerations disappeared almost entirely, which could be explained by a neorealist understanding suggesting that previous moves aligning Russia and France reestablished balance in the system, requiring no additional balancing behavior. French foreign policy statements in 2007 demonstrated greater attention to previously less salient concerns while the predominant issues remained despite decrease in focus. Reflecting concern with international security issues, discourse consistent with institutional expectations remained while energy concerns bolstered the occurrences of neoclassical realist-related rhetoric. At the same time, events within Russia such as violence in Chechnya and elections, led to dialogue related to both constructivist and democratic peace approaches. After peaking the previous year, support for Russian democracy declined while concerns about it emerged for the first time. Furthermore, discussions of Russian power and systemic polarity returned to a noticeable level in 2007.

Things changed dramatically in 2008, for obvious reasons. While multilateralism most salient overall, rhetoric consistent with constructivist expectations jumped dramatically and became almost equally noticeable. Furthermore, beginning in August, this discourse overwhelmingly dominated. Since the conflict in Georgia did not occur until August, much of the

year was focused on other issues, particularly continued concern with Iran yielding a significant amount of discussions reflecting institutionalist considerations. Once the fighting began in Georgia, however, statements primarily manifested constructivist themes. At the same time, the conflict also contributed to the multilateral dialogue. At the same time, realist-related rhetoric concerned with regional security also found prominence. Furthermore, continuing previous patterns, French policy makers' statements portraying Russian democracy in a favorable light reached its highest point in 2008 while expressions of concern about Russian democracy, which had been highest in 2007, began a two-year decline.

For the first time in the years examined in this study, multilateralism did not dominate the discourse in 2009. Instead, references to themes related to neoclassical realist explanations, especially energy security and regionally security, became preeminent, despite the fact that Iran as an issue commanded the most attention. Liberal issues reemerged in the discourse while constructivist issues almost completely disappeared. Of note, statements reflecting a neorealist perspective appeared again in the discourse which is surprising given the absence of issues that would indicate a change in systemic conditions. Furthermore, from a neorealist approach, continued support for Russia runs contrary to the fact that Russia had just initiated its military modernization program, increasing its relative power.

The following years returned multilateralism to its position of prominence, practically monopolizing the rhetoric in the years leading up to the Ukraine conflict. The pattern prior to the Russo-Georgian war continued into 2010 while security concerns faded slightly and multilateral references regained their place at the top of the dialogical heap as discussions about Iran's nuclear program increased. Democracy was the next most salient discourse and was entirely

positive in orientation. The subsequent years, 2011-13, brought about steeper changes in the priority of the issues as significant concerns surfaced related to the emerging and strengthening civil war in Syria. While the rhetoric centering on the ideas of multilateralism remained prominent, the tone changed from cooperation to opposition. Instead of discussing ways that France and Russia cooperated, French policy makers expressed their disappointments in Russian disregard for coordinated solutions to the conflict in Syria. Despite the decline in French-Russian cooperation and Russian increase in influence in Syria, statements consistent with realist perspectives such as increases in threats fails to appear in any statements. Beyond the disproportionately dominant discourse focused on institutional considerations in these years, evidence related to other viewpoints appeared very infrequently. Cooperation reflecting neoclassical realist explanations appeared more frequently than any other secondary issues in 2011 as French policy makers also discussed Russian contributions to various regional security issues, albeit outside a multinational context. Similarly, 2012 brought increased French discussions about Russian democracy in light of the elections there. Although support remained, it was weak and statements expressing concern increased. In 2013 constructivist discourse returned to a slight degree, focusing on French appeals to Russia to assist in resolving the disintegration in Syria along the lines of international law and responsibilities as a member of the United Nations Security Council.

For obvious reasons, 2014 shows another significant reorientation of French discourse. As seen in 2008, the rhetoric reveals a dramatic shift toward themes associated with constructivist perspective in response to Russian actions in Ukraine, including Crimea and the eastern provinces, highlighting violations of international norms and calling for Russian

compliance with them. Multilateral references remained a noticeable dimension but, as seen in the discussions in previous years focused on Syria, France's policy makers expressed disappointment with Russian cooperation with other states, although a modicum of positive dialogue remained about Russian actions with respect to Iran. At the same time, rhetoric reflecting neoclassical realist explanations increased to the same level as institutional considerations based on French leaders' continued belief in the need for Russian help in maintaining regional security. As in 2013, references, both positive or negative, to democracy remained absent from the discourse, as did liberal issues related to economy and other forms of cooperation.

Discussion — assessing the France findings

To what extent do these frequencies of references to various aspects of the world and French relations with Russia tell us anything about French foreign policy decision-making? As mentioned earlier, competing theoretical approaches offer plausible explanations to account for the different French responses to the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and Russian interventions in Crimea and Ukraine proper in 2014. France did not support EU sanctions against Russia in 2008, whereas in 2014 it supported a packet of sanctions against Russia business interests and individuals. Using the tools of discourse analysis, I subjected a number of alternative explanations of states' foreign policy to empirical tests. Identifying the predominant discourse serves as the starting point for the analysis; identifying the most salient rhetoric from each time period and comparing them will be the factor to consider in identifying the causes of French foreign policy choices. However, it will not suffice to consider merely the salience of discourse related to the specific cases. Given the change in policy decisions (the dependent variable), it is

necessary to note the differences, that is to say the increase or decrease, in amount of rhetoric and compare that with the expectations laid out in the possible explanations.

Table 5 — Changes in French discourse over time

Theoretical Perspective	Change in frequency
Neorealism	—
Neoclassical Realism	—
Institutionalism	=
Liberalism	—
Constructivism	=
Democracy	—

Table 5 offers a snapshot of change between 2008 and

2014 in terms of emphasis of issues during the year of

conflict according to frequency. A ‘—’ sign indicates that

the salience of themes associated with a particular

theoretical perspective declined; a ‘+’ indicates an

increase in the frequency of a set of themes, and =

indicates no change over time.

Hypothesis 1 argued that changes in systemic conditions

led to alternative foreign policy reactions. However, the

rhetoric failed to conform to the expectations of realist-inspired explanations. As mentioned

earlier, a neorealist explanation suggests that the conflict in Ukraine presented a more significant

change in the balance of power, either regionally or globally, as Russia grew in its capabilities by

acquiring more territory (Crimea) as well as securing a greater presence in the Black Sea. This

led to the expectation that dialogue reflecting structural concerns should be higher in 2014 than

in 2008, when in fact the data show just the opposite. French rhetoric exhibited twice as much

concern with issues such as polarity and great power status in 2008 as in 2014. Thus the texts do

not demonstrate a change in French foreign policy behavior based on structural concerns and

hypothesis 1 must be rejected.

Similarly, the neoclassical realists’ focus on mitigations to systemic impulses fail to

emerge as a suitable motivation for French foreign policies as asserted in hypothesis two. Based

on expectations of changes in elite perceptions about the level of Russian threat or the mitigating pressures of shared security concerns, neoclassical realists would expect to see a decrease in prominence of corresponding rhetoric between 2008 and 2014. The data initially reflect support for this hypothesis. Comparing the relative frequency of the discourse suggests that neoclassical concerns were more prominent in 2008 than in 2014, which would have led to a change in behavior. Specifically, being more concerned with factors beyond Russia's increased power in the region in 2008, French foreign policy makers opted to avoid confrontation. On the other hand, as such concerns became less prominent, they were more free to oppose Russia, resulting in support for sanctions. Therefore, initial consideration suggests that hypothesis two cannot be rejected.

Institutional rhetoric, as highlighted in hypothesis three, appears in French discourse frequently over time, demonstrating a regular preference on the part of elites for solutions to conflicts based on international consensus. An institutionalist account initially demonstrates a theoretically consistent decrease in priority between 2008 and 2014. During the former year, multilateral references represented the preeminent discourse while in the latter discussions reflecting institutional considerations markedly trailed themes consistent with a constructivist perspective. Consequently, hypothesis three cannot be rejected.

As highlighted in hypothesis four, a liberal perspective contends that French rhetoric would demonstrate decreased concern over time with issues of economics and interdependence. More specifically, that it would be more reserved in its reactions to Russian interventions when trade and bilateral relationships assumed a high priority while decision makers would take a more confrontational stance in the event that they were less concerned about their economic

relationship with Russia. As an initial discourse reveals, French statements related to this bilateral relationship remained relevant in 2008 but had disappeared prior to 2014, as predicted. Consequently, France's support for sanctions in 2014 might be explained by a decline in concern about the impact on mutual trade benefits and therefore this hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis five suggests that changes in perceptions of shared identity can explain French policy makers' different responses. However, as noted before references to a common "Europeanness" are infrequent and disappear prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Georgian war. The discourse reveals no influence of these factors on policy choices. Therefore, hypothesis five can be rejected.

Foreign policy concerns informed by constructivist expectation about state action based on adherence to or enforcement of international norms such as international law, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and human rights appear significantly only in the conflict periods. In both 2008 and 2014, their dialogue shifts dramatically from previous years to concentrate on normative issues. Rather than depicting their relationship with Russia as a shared need to reach multilateral solutions as in most years, French policy makers turned the focus on issues of international law, sovereignty, and normative state responsibilities. Despite its prominence, this discourse cannot however explain diametrically opposed outcomes. As an independent variable, it remains the same and by itself cannot therefore offer a reason for a changed dependent variable. If constructivist concerns had been absent or less significant in either case, they could account for support for or opposition to sanctions in one or other case. This is not what the data show however and we must therefore reject hypothesis six.

Finally, hypothesis seven maintained that French foreign policy behavior was the result of policy makers' perceptions of the trajectory of Russian democracy. While never a dominant theme, rhetoric regarding democracy in Russia manifested a distinct pattern. Despite being a regular component of dialogue at the beginning of the period studied, discourse consistent with the democratic peace approach had faded away almost completely by the time of Russia's interventions in Ukraine. In fact, Russian elections in 2012 led to a very minor reemergence of democracy in the dialogue before disappearing once more. Having decreased dramatically between 2008 and 2014, discussions about the state of democracy could also point to a change in French foreign policy behavior. A desire to support continued progress of liberal reforms would have led to restraint on the part of the French when responding to the Russian war with Georgia. Alternatively, the declining support for or attention to Russian domestic politics in 2014 suggests a freedom to confront Russia in response to its interventions in Ukraine. Therefore, this hypothesis cannot be rejected either.

After initial consideration of all potential explanations, four remain: neoclassical realism, institutionalism, liberalism, and democratic peace theory. In order to further examine whether one or more of these explains the outcomes, I reconsidered the cases based on a narrower focus on data from 2008. Having begun in August, the Georgia conflict and responses to it concerned only the latter half of 2008, meaning that patterns of relating between the countries continued as before for more than half the year. Once the Russo-Georgian war took place, however, a new factor emerged that may have effected states interests and priorities. Therefore, looking at the rhetoric subsequent to the conflict in 2008 and comparing that with French discourse surrounding Ukraine in 2014 offers a better comparison between cases.

When considering the specific effects of the conflicts on neoclassical realist-related rhetoric, differences between the two cases become less distinct. While the number of appearances of this specific rhetoric decreases as noted, the position of these themes with respect to the others does not. In both instances, neoclassical realist rhetoric trails only constructivist and multilateral references, making it relatively as salient in 2014 as it was in 2008. Moreover, the conflicts produced a similar response in each case and, contrary to initial findings, the reaction was greater in 2014, in opposition to expectations. In the years prior to the Georgia-Russia conflict, concerns over regional and energy security and other shared security interests were a regular part of the French discourse. However, following the events of August 2008, this rhetoric noticeably increased. Specifically, in 2007 these issues are found in 11 references and in the first part of 2008, prior to the war, this discourse emerges in another 4 texts. However, following the conflict, the texts reveal ten references to neoclassical realist themes. When considering the increase from 2013 to 2014, the jump is even greater. As outlined above, this discourse had disappeared by 2013. However, the following year saw it return in eight quotations. While the war in Georgia increased an existing dialogue between the states, the events in Ukraine reinvigorated a dormant discourse. After fading from focus, energy concerns and attention to regional security reemerged as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. Therefore, rather than becoming less important between the two conflicts, a closer consideration of neoclassical realist-related rhetoric suggests that French decision makers were more influenced by such considerations in 2014 than in 2008, contrary to expectations. Consequently, hypothesis 2 can be rejected.

Reconsideration of the institutionalist account yields a similar result. Prior to August 2008, themes associated with this perspective dominated the discourse, exceeding all others including constructivist-related discussions. However, following the Russo-Georgian war, rhetoric reflecting constructivist dialogue assumes prominence, moving the multilateral down to second priority, just as observed in 2014.

At the same time, as one of the two theoretical perspectives that consists of both a positive and a negative component, it is necessary to examine the discourse more closely to see if there was a change not only in frequency but also in tone. As part of this analysis, I broke down the rhetoric from 2008 to separate texts prior to and after the Russian intervention in August. This separation yielded only 3 of the previous 13 positive and 1 of 2 negative references to multilateralism in 2008 as well as 10 of 21 segments discussing EU-Russia cooperation related to the time period subsequent to the Russo-Georgian war. The references for 2014 at first glance look noticeably different, demonstrating a greater emphasis on multilateral failures (12/17 total) and only one segment related to EU-Russia cooperation. Initially, the disparity between the cases supports the predicted change in institutional commitment. However, a closer look at the texts shows that the majority of the discourse concerned with EU-Russia cooperation in 2008 relates to the Georgia conflict and reveals French disappointment with Russia's unwillingness to adhere to its commitments outlined in the Six Point Plan just as the texts from 2014 focus on the Russian failure to comply with negotiated cease fires. Each case, then, displays equal emphasis and a primarily critical tone toward Russia's adherence to multilateral solutions. Consequently, consistent with the initial conclusions, more detailed consideration of the institutional perspective finds that an explanation based on changes in commitments to multilateralism cannot

explain divergent foreign policy behaviors. Therefore, hypothesis three can ultimately be rejected.

Next, I return to consider the possibility of a liberal, primarily economic, explanations. Once again, considering the data more closely with respect to particular conflict periods reveals similarities between the cases. After narrowing the period in 2008 to consider only August to December, I found an equal focus of liberal discourse during that time as in 2014—and minimally at that. Only once in each time period did a French policy maker mention liberal considerations at all. In 2008 the other references preceded the conflict which showed a significant decrease from the previous year. By August 2008, discourse reflecting a liberal perspective had already decreased to a minimal level just as was evident in 2014. This allowed me to conclude that, in response to each conflict, they exhibited similar in attention (or inattention) to liberal concerns. Consequently, despite its initial plausibility, an explanation based on liberal concerns with economics and interdependence cannot account for French support for or opposition to sanctions and hypothesis four must be rejected.

Finally, I reconsider the possibility that views of Russian democracy may have influenced French foreign policy. As previously mentioned, rhetoric reflecting French perspectives on Russian democracy displayed similar patterns as liberal themes. Neither demonstrated a notable difference between the two cases and both disappeared almost entirely by 2013. However, unlike liberalism, not only did the frequency change but speakers completely altered the tone in the rhetoric. All liberal discussions shared the same concern with promoting or protecting French-Russian economic and/or cultural connections; there were never any negative aspects to this relationship. That was not the case with democracy-related language, however. On the contrary,

as discussed previously, French rhetoric which began as supportive and positive in relation to Russia, eventually became indifferent at best and openly hostile at worst.

Answering the question about French foreign policy motivations based solely on identifying the predominant discourse is insufficient. The French foreign policy texts considered in this study lead to a possible conclusion in support of the liberal peace theory. Understandings of shared democracy in 2008 led to non-conflictual behavior resulting in a lack of support for sanctions while an unfavorable outlook concerning the progress of Russian democracy led to confrontational behavior resulting in promotion of European sanctions in 2014.

Analysis of German Foreign Policy Discourse

Having considered the French case, I now turn to consider motivations behind German foreign policy decisions using the discourse analysis of the German foreign policy makers' speeches. As with the preceding analysis, I start by outlining the texts that contain the rhetoric and review the contexts from which they emerge. Subsequently I highlight the themes reflected in the discourse and compare their salience over time. Finally, I apply the findings to the hypotheses.

German data sources

Analyzing German foreign policy required a broader range of sources for the texts compared to the French case. Since I do not speak or read German, I could not rely solely on documents published on the government websites. Those data sources exist but not for the duration of the time period covered in this study. Robust English-only documentation emerges only in 2010. Some forms of communication are available prior to that time but do not offer a sufficient number of texts. To supplement officially published documents, I had to rely on media sites as well as other websites.

Both the office of the Chancellor⁹ and the Federal Foreign Office¹⁰ provide a wealth of documents on their websites in both German and English and likewise have search functions to concentrate on particular topics. For each of these sites, searching based on only the key word “Russia” yielded more than enough texts. However, the availability of English-language texts differs depending on the category (i.e., press release, speech, interview, etc.). The Chancellor’s office provides a number of different types of documents. As with other entities, it posts transcripts of the Chancellor’s speeches and press releases as well as its own summaries of the Chancellor’s activities in two forms. First, the Chancellor’s staff publishes ‘articles,’ which are self-created reports of important meetings or events. In addition, they release travel reports, which describe trips to foreign countries or engagements with leaders of other states. Both of these types of documents include direct quotes from the Chancellor, not merely summaries or reports of activity. Most documents, with the exception of travel reports, appear sparsely prior to 2010 but beginning in that year, most types of texts were available in English. But for one speech, all texts prior to 2010 fell into the category of travel report. In addition, none of the texts on this site preceded Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was elected in 2005; therefore no data from Chancellor Schroeder was available on a government site. However, Gerhard Schroeder maintains his own website¹¹ on which he provides translated versions of speeches and statements from his time in office. While the number is small, it provided a limited number of substantive texts for the period between 2003 and 2005.

⁹ www.bundestkanzlerin.de

¹⁰ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Web-Archiv_node.html

¹¹ <http://gerhard-schroeder.de/news/>

Similarly, the Federal Foreign Office publishes translated versions of various texts but as above, these do not extend back through the entire period covered in this study. Unlike the Chancellor's office, the Foreign Office produced press releases, offering translated versions beginning in 2008. Starting in 2010, transcripts of interviews become available in English, not only from the Foreign Minister but other government officials as well. From 2012 English translations of speeches are available and finally in 2014 the Foreign Office similarly published translations of media articles concerning officials from the ministry.

As is evident, the texts available from government archives do not provide sufficient data for the entire range of this study. In order to obtain more foreign policy texts from German policy makers, I turned to newspaper articles. The search began with stories published in 2003 and continued through 2009 when a sufficient number of German government documents became available. Beginning with the LexisNexis database, I looked for articles containing references to Russia and either the Chancellor (Schroeder through 2005, Merkel beginning in late 2005) or the Foreign Minister (Fischer through late 2005, followed by Steinmeier). This initial search yielded over 1500 documents for 2003 alone, which led me to add additional constraints. Initially, I limited my search to prominent American newspapers: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, which returned a manageable number of documents. However, another source emerged that provided more varied perspectives: the World News Connection¹² database, which publishes international media reports translated by the US government. These articles came from a wide variety of countries, especially, Germany, Russia, China, France and other European countries. For data on German policy makers' speech regarding Russia covering the years 2004 to 2008 I

¹² <https://www.eastview.com/Files/EVWorldNewsConnection.pdf>

relied almost exclusively on texts found in this database. Regardless of the source, I included only articles with actual quotes, rather than a journalist’s summary or paraphrase.

The final list of sources is contained below in Table 6. As it shows, the sources of texts changed significantly over time. In the early years of the study I included few government texts, only a few speeches and articles, and rather relied on media reports instead. Eventually, as government-furnished data became more readily accessible, I relied solely on them, transitioning from those that remained in the ‘politics from above category’ (Fetzer, 2013) to those that reflected ‘mediated politics.’”

Table 6 — Types of German texts

<u>Year</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Newspaper Article	17	26	8	30	37	34	19	0	0	0	0	0
Speech	1	1	1	5	2	1	5	10	8	7	8	0
Interview	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	12	3	28	20	36
Gov Release	0	0	1	5	7	9	3	6	5	5	0	0
Total	18	27	11	44	46	44	28	28	16	40	28	36

After coding the data, a total of 688 quotations emerged from the texts. As expected given the sources, the speakers consisted principally of the Chancellor (38%) and the Foreign Minister (50%). The rest of the references come from a variety of government officials with contributions from a German Minister of State (5%) and the Chancellor’s Office (3%) providing noticeably frequent discourse.

The documents fit into several categories of talk as described by Fetzer (2013): the speeches and articles represent discourse from the ‘top-down’ while the interviews offer

‘mediated discourse.’ The former represent a politician’s viewpoint on a particular situation or the stance taken by the government. Alternatively, the latter demonstrate the idea of ‘doing politics in the media’ and allow for interaction between the policy maker (or his representative) and the journalist which facilitates greater clarification at the time or more deliberate speech since the speaker is aware that her points may be contested. When possible, I opt for interview transcripts given the two-way nature of the discourse. However, for this case study I relied on texts of both types due to the availability of sources of data in English. The sources of data for the conflict years, which form the heart of my research, differ but nonetheless provide sufficient data to analyze the discourse.

What did they talk about? Issues in German-Russian discourse

Germany interacted with Russia in multiple contexts through the years considered in this study. As one of the key actors in the European Union and a global economic power, Germany had frequent occasions to relate to Russia on key worldwide and regional concerns, including economic and security issues, in multilateral fora. At the same time, these two countries frequently engaged in purely bilateral contexts. Figure 11 shows the frequency of references to different issues by year as a percentage of the total references coded in the discourse analysis for the respective year. Considering the percentage of the discourse allows a comparison both within and across years.

Bilateral topics consisted of areas of joint concern including economic, cultural, technical cooperation. These concerns were most prominent in 50% of the years under investigation and were either the first- or second-most referenced topic during all years but 2007. Over time, a number of international events brought the two countries together, although they did not occupy

an enduring place over time. As shown in Figure 11, Germany and Russia shared involvement in Iran's nuclear program, Iraq's WMD, the Middle East Peace Process, and Syria. Regional issues such as Georgia, Ukraine and more general discussions of European security also found a significant place in Russo-German rhetoric. Finally, given Germany's prominent leadership role in the European Union and influence in NATO, a robust amount of discourse exists between the two countries related to the relationships between these international organizations and Russia.

Given the starting point of this study (2003), the first issue that emerges is the international effort to respond to the Iraqi WMD program. This issue formed the foundation for

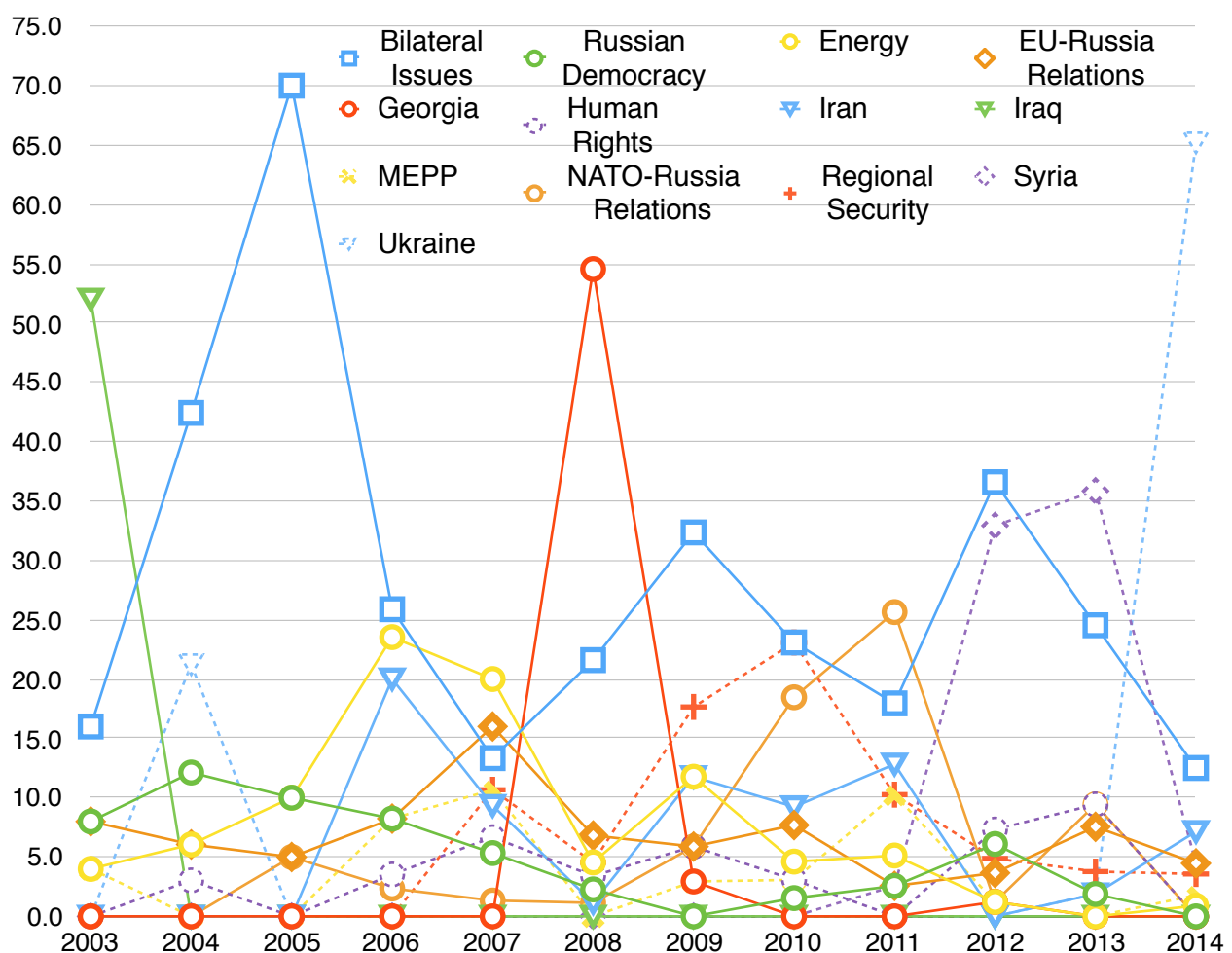


Figure 11 — German issues over time (% total annual discourse)

the majority (52%) of German discourse during 2003. However, once the US-led coalition began the war in Iraq, it disappeared from the rhetoric. In its wake, bilateral issues dominated German foreign policy rhetoric in the years 2004 and 2005, comprising 42% and 70% respectively, which began a pattern of consistent bilateral focus that was only interrupted by significant, multinational events. In 2004, there was a brief spike related to Ukraine in response to disputed elections there, the resolution of which both Germany and Russia involved themselves. As with the previous crisis, once it was resolved the issue retreated from the dialogue. Discussions related to democracy likewise appeared frequently in this year, constituting a greater percentage of the discourse than in any subsequent year.

Possibly as a result of elections in Germany, the level of Russo-German rhetoric declined significantly in general in 2005. Subjects of German policy makers' discourse consisted of over 70% bilateral issues while multilateral or multinational events formed a negligible part of what little was said that year. Rhetoric related to energy and democracy represented about 10% each, which, due to the limited number of texts, consists of only two or three references throughout the entire year.

Subsequent years saw multinational, regional, and global issues emerge again. While bilateral discussions remained most prominent in 2006 at 25%, discourse surrounding energy (23%) and Iran's nuclear program (20%) drew almost equal attention. The former is not surprising given the crisis that emerged with regard to Ukrainian delivery of Russian gas to central and Western Europe. Eclipsing purely bilateral concerns, energy discussions rose to prominence in 2007, appearing only slightly more frequently than dialogue concerning the EU-Russia relationship. The multilateral turn that year is most likely a result of the fact that

Chancellor Merkel held the rotating Presidency of the European Council for half of 2007.

Furthermore, German policy makers devoted significant attention to the MEPP and regional security concerns while the Iranian nuclear issue receded slightly in salience.

The pattern of international issues flaring up for a year and then receding into silence is demonstrated most robustly in 2008 with the appearance of the Russo-Georgian war. Despite lasting less than a month—up to three if you include all of the rhetoric that followed—the war constituted a disproportionate 55% of the discourse, although this is not surprising given the widespread concern it elicited from European countries. Nevertheless, as quickly as it had appeared in the rhetoric, it likewise vanished almost entirely by 2009. When not focused on Georgia, German-Russian dialogue overwhelmingly centered once again around bilateral issues, which were reflected in 20% of the statements. By 2009 this subject returned to predominance at 32% of the discourse. Similarly, after declining in salience the previous year, regional security concerns regained attention in 2009, constituting almost 18% of the discourse while Iran's nuclear program and energy considerations appeared in almost 12%.

Subsequent years saw great volatility in the issues comprising German-Russian discourse. Bilateral topics continued to appear frequently in 2010 (23%) and 2011 (17%) but other considerations either matched or superseded that focus in salience. Regional security concerns found equal attention as a strictly bilateral focus in 2010 while the following year rhetoric surrounding NATO-Russia relations became gained prominence at 26% of the dialogue. Similarly, the discourse during these years demonstrated one additional consistency in that the Iranian nuclear issue remained a noticeable topic of discussion.

The next two years revealed a similar pattern. In 2012, bilateral issues returned to the top of the list (37%) but emerged as only slightly more salient than the civil war in Syria (33%) while other concerns faded dramatically. Discussions about Iran's nuclear program remained a notable undercurrent while dialogue regarding Russian democracy reemerged as significant, reflecting the fact that 2012 was an election year in Russia. The crisis in Syria became the most salient topic in 2013 (36%) with purely bilateral dialogue declining but maintaining a frequent presence at 25% of the discourse. A number of other considerations rose slightly in frequency at the expense of bilateral rhetoric: EU-Russian relations, concerns about human rights, and the debate over a European-based missile defense system made noticeable appearances at over 9%.

Subsequently, each of these issues was drowned out the following year as a result of Russian activity in various parts of Ukraine. Discourse on this topic unsurprisingly formed almost two-thirds of German policy makers' utterances related to Russia. Dramatically reduced from previous years, bilateral dialogue was the second most salient issue in 2014. Other issues faded significantly from the dialogue and constituted a small portion of the discussion.

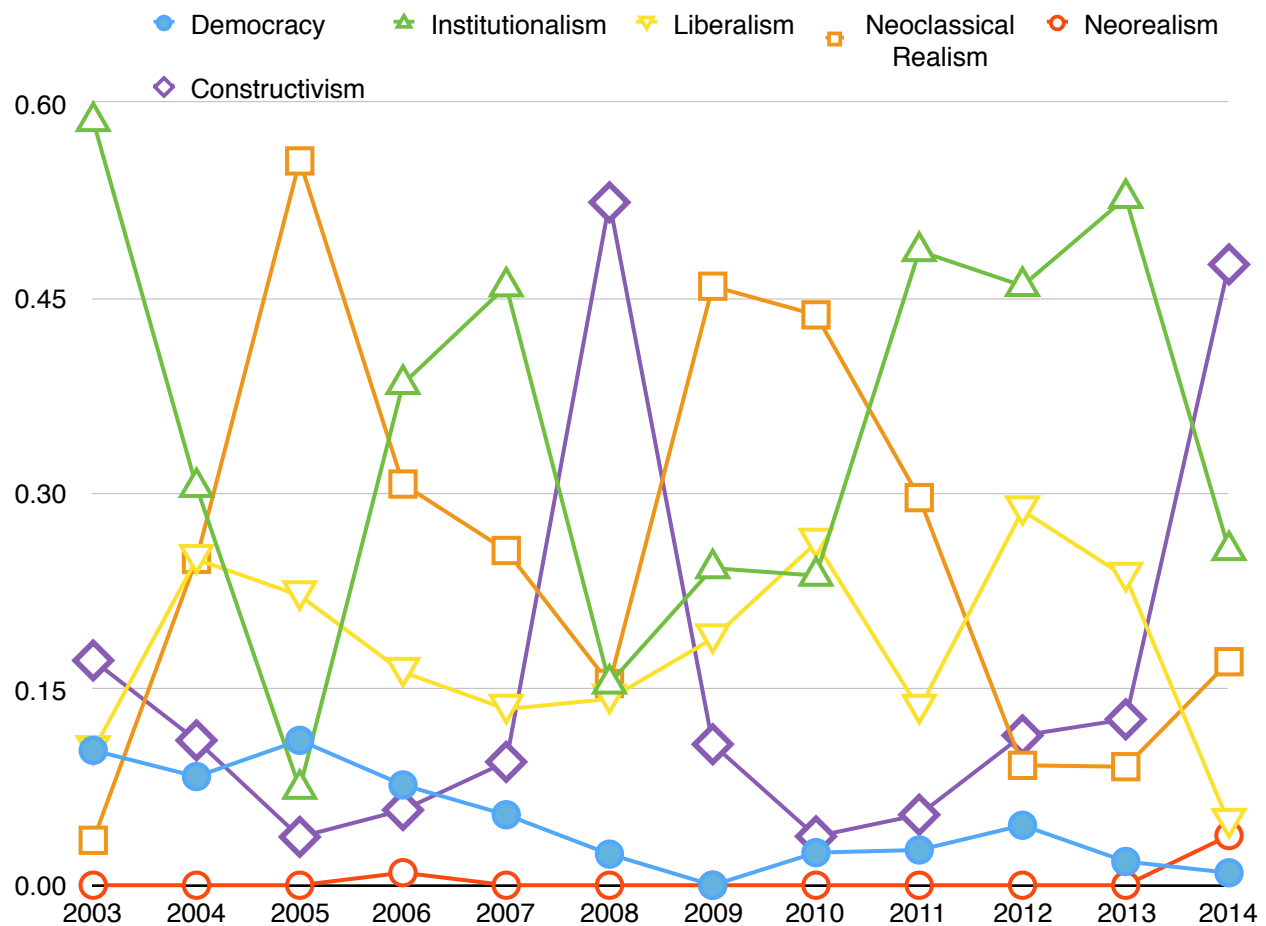
As described above, a certain issues continued to appear at varying levels of salience across the breadth of the time period under consideration. Above all, the discourse focused on bilateral issues. Beyond that, a mixture of regional considerations and international crises predominated. Over the twelve-year period considered, Ukraine appeared in more rhetoric than other runners-up. Energy concerns, while only rising to the top of the list in 2006-07, appeared next most frequently. Syria and EU-Russian relations were close behind in salience followed by the conflict in Georgia. Other topics such as MEPP, NATO-Russian relations, and democracy found their way into the dialogue at a regular, albeit minimal, frequencies.

These issues provide the background for considering the various themes that emerge across time. Independently, they do not provide independent insight into the motivations behind foreign policy decisions, but as a basis for foreign policy decisions, they help to understand why particular themes increase or decrease at certain times. For instance, rhetoric emphasizing multilateralism must be based on an issue requiring responses from the international community such as concern over the Iraq weapons of Mass destruction (WMD) program. Considering the themes in light of the international context of the time offers a fuller understanding of the discourse.

In their own words - German foreign policy motivations

Throughout the range of the time under consideration, evidence of almost every set of themes is evident to a greater or lesser extent. The exception to this is the lack of references concerned with the nature of the international system which would be consistent with the structural realist approach. References to polarity of any kind, whether bi-, uni-, or multi-polarity appear only twice as do discussions of power or capabilities. Figure 12 shows the percentage of the discourse represented by themes associated with each of the theoretically possible explanations. At the same time, neoclassical realist themes frequently appear in the rhetoric of German politicians. While German policy makers would have been interested in systemic dynamics, their discourse, summarized in figure 13, reveals a number of influences that would mitigate against predicted balancing behaviors in response to increasing Russian power and influence.

Directly tied to the overarching concern mentioned above of energy in German-Russian relations, energy *security* formed a prominent theme in the interstate discourse. There were some discussions related to this theme in the early years but it became highly salient in 2006-7, which



**Figure 12 — Theoretical perspectives in German discourse over time
(% total annual discourse)**

matches the progress of issues over time as seen above. Following German-Russian intergovernmental dialogues in 2006, Chancellor Merkel remarked, “It is in our interests to preserve and expand contacts in energy.” (ITAR-TASS, 2006) During EU Council meetings later that year, she reinforced the perspective, saying “What we must make clear is that we offer security for (energy) contracts and we expect the same from Russia,” in matters of contract security and market access” (Harrington, 2006). More directly, Merkel admitted in an interview with a Greek journalist in 2007, “Europe needs security in the domain of energy resources. It needs the reliability of its suppliers the same way Russia needs our reliability as a

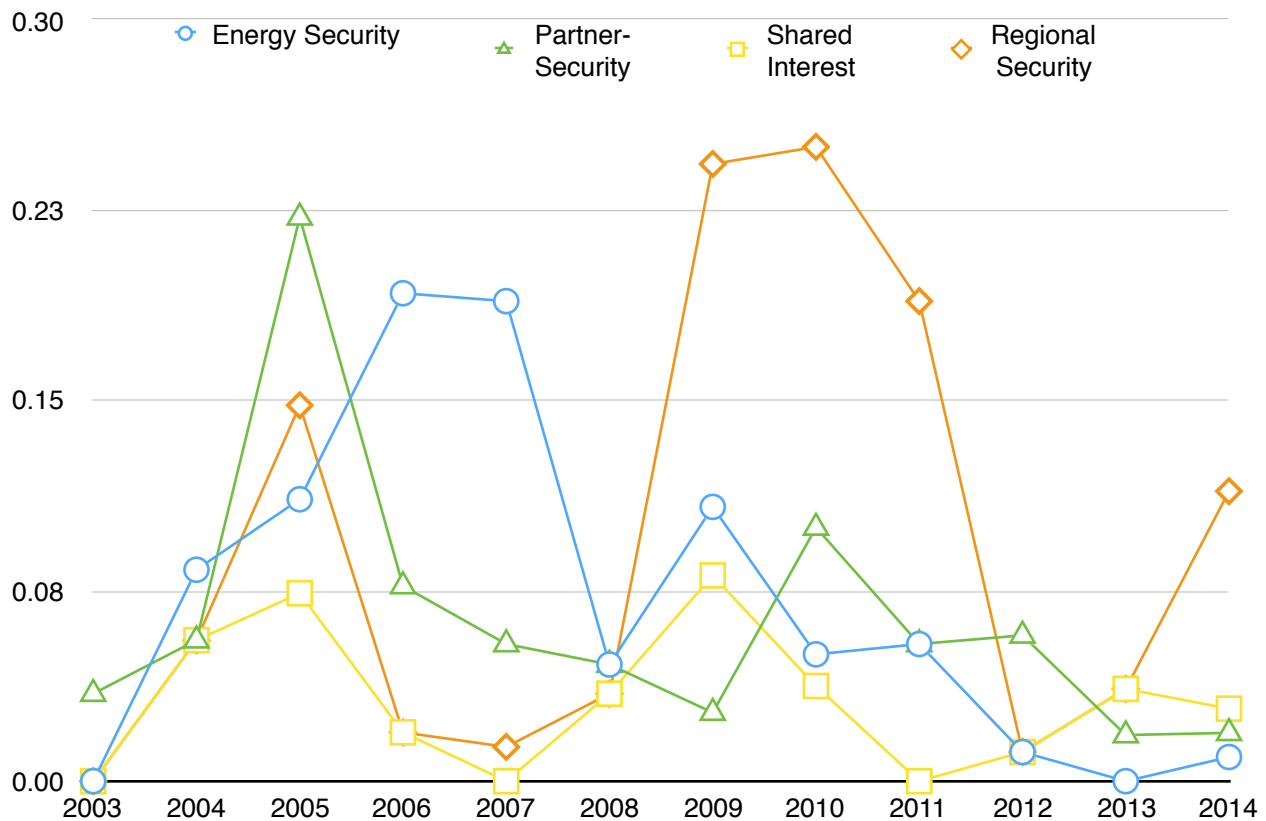


Figure 13 — Realist themes in German discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

client.” (Papakonstandinou, 2007) After sharing its leading role within the neoclassical realist group in 2008, energy security declined in salience and eventually faded almost entirely.

Reflecting a reorientation of focus, rhetoric regarding the Russian contribution to regional security spiked in the years 2009-2011. This relates to the belief that cooperation with Russia is necessary to preserve European or regional security, regardless of how the balance of power may shift. At the 2010 Munich Security Conference, Foreign Minister Westerwelle asserted in his speech that “[t]he strategic partnership with Russia is not only one of the keys to European security but also vital for resolving global problems.” (2010a) Later that year in advance of the NATO summit in Lisbon, he commented “What we hope to do in Lisbon is lay the basis for a strategic security partnership from which both sides [NATO and Russia] stand to

benefit.” (Westerwelle, 2010d) While diminished in the discourse in 2012-13, security concerns reemerged in 2014 at the top of realist-related themes. Steinmeier again highlighted the critical role that Russia plays in the region:

There is, however, one certain and undeniable fact which applies to the foreseeable future: we will continue to be reliant on cooperation with Russia. This cooperation serves our own security and is thus in Germany’s best interest, as well as that of the EU and the United States. A European security architecture geared to the long term is inconceivable without Russia. (2014a)

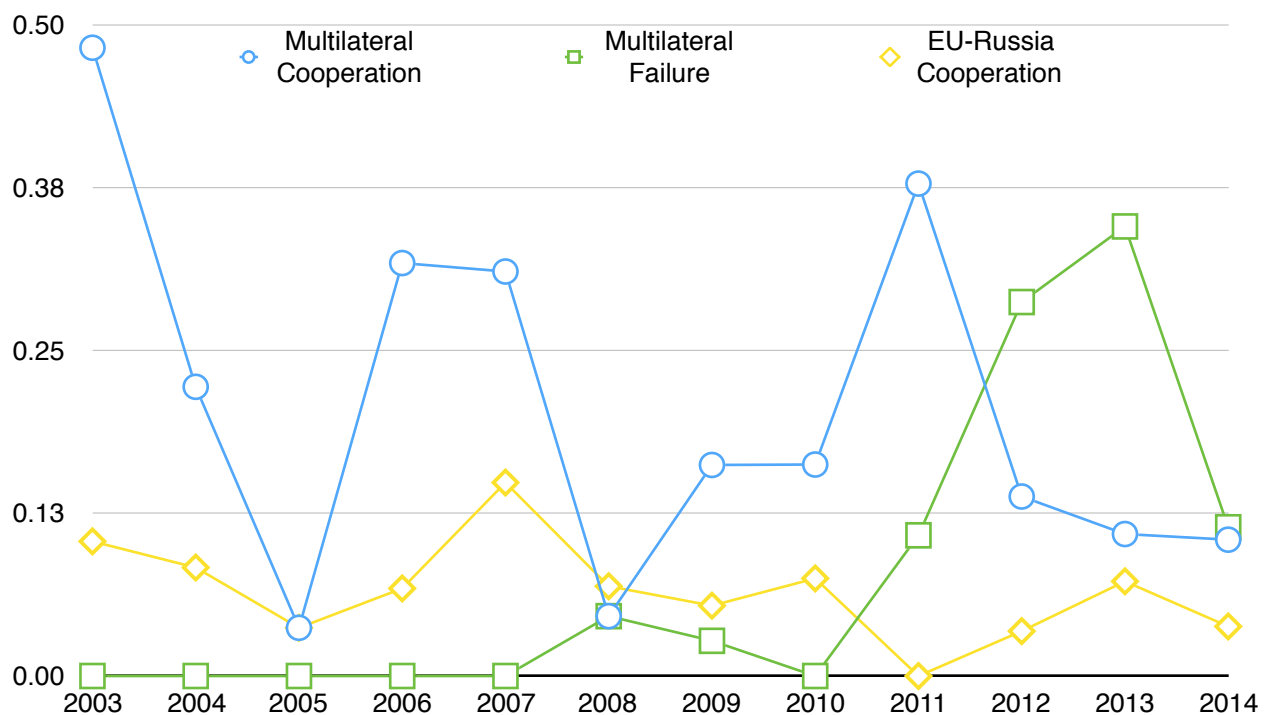
While not dominant in the early years under consideration, rhetoric describing Russia as a partner, particularly a “strategic partner,” constituted a noticeable part of the German foreign policy statements. Emphasis on the need for a strategic partnership, energy security, and prioritization of regional security issues demonstrate delayed reactions to systemic imperatives or their deviation from expected responses to increased Russia capabilities and assertiveness as seen in their intervention in Georgia or their military modernization described above. Rather than taking actions to balance against Russia, which would be expected from a purely neorealist perspective, German policy makers preferred to focus on developing close relationships with Russia, particularly in security affairs. Moreover, Russia stood to gain relatively more from Germany than the other way around which goes against the neorealist assertions that states will seek relative versus absolute gains. The consistent discourse about the need for strategic partnerships demonstrates the restraining effect of other (domestic) forces, such as a lack of consensus among leaders about the threat posed by Russia or the desire of domestic actors to prioritize other security concerns

Early texts reveal regular references to German-Russian partnership but became more salient beginning in 2008. In remarks ahead of a visit to the newly elected President Dmitry Medvedev, Chancellor Merkel stated “Germany and Russia are bound by close, friendly and strategic relations. We can develop and boost them. I think it is both possible and necessary” (ITAR-TASS, 2008a). Moreover, Foreign Minister Steinmeier commented in a speech to German ambassadors, “We are now in a world where everyone ... needs partners more than they need opponents. That goes for all actors on the international stage, I think, for Russia and the United States included,” Steinmeier said (2008). The timing of the latter is particularly noteworthy in that the address occurred September 8, 2008 barely over a month after the Russo-Georgian War. His successor, Guido Westerwelle, returned to this theme at the Munich Security Conference in 2010, declaring “The strategic partnership with Russia is not only one of the keys to European security but also vital for resolving global problems.” (2010a) and continued to highlight this perspective in following years, despite other disagreements such as the arrest and trial of the punk band Pussy Riot as discussed below. Westerwelle described in an interview in 2012, “We want a strategic partnership with Russia, not just on energy and security issues, but also with respect to the rule of law” (2012b).

As the above examples demonstrate, rhetoric reflecting neoclassical realist themes related to energy, regional security, shared interests and bilateral partnerships formed a significant part of German policy makers’ discourse over time, with noticeable peaks in 2006 as a result of the gas crisis in Ukraine, and 2010 based on concerns about regional security. At the same time, significant evidence exists to support the idea of a German “multilateral reflex,” i.e., an

immediate turn toward institutional solutions for multinational problems. Figure 14 demonstrates the appearance of these themes over time.

Multilateral cooperation between Germany and Russia initially appears in conjunction with noticeable international crises. The first is obviously in 2003 in response to the US-led war in Iraq. Germany, along with France and Russia, led the opposition to the use of force as a means to resolve the uncertainty of Saddam Hussein's defiance of international efforts to end Iraq's WMD program. During the discussions at the United Nations, France, Germany, and Russia asserted in a joint statement that "The use of force can only be a last resort." (Agence France-Presse, 2003) Put slightly differently, these states' foreign ministers soon followed with another release which stated, "Our common objective remains the full and effective disarmament of Iraq, in compliance with Resolution 1441." (New York Times, 2003)



**Figure 14 — Institutional themes in German discourse over time
(% total annual discourse)**

Another spike in multilateral rhetoric appeared in 2006 driven by cooperation on the issues of the Iranian nuclear weapons program and the MEPP. On a visit to Russia, Chancellor Merkel commented, “On the question of the Iranian nuclear program Merkel and Putin agreed to continue to work with other European governments and the US administration in an effort to find a solution.” (Office of the Chancellor, 2006a) Later that year following a tripartite meeting with Presidents Chirac and Putin, she again noted their solidarity concerning the Middle East Peace Process: “All three countries agreed that a two-state solution must be found in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that President Abbas must be given political support.” (Chancellor, 2006b)

After fading in importance for a few years, this discourse reemerged in 2010 as the international community attempted to find a resolution to the raging civil war in Syria, peaking again in 2011. In contrast to early German rhetoric showing no indication of tensions between the two countries or differences of opinions with regard to multinational solutions, discussions over time became noticeably critical of the lack of Russian willingness to cooperate with the international community as the Syrian crisis drug on, particularly in 2012 and 2013. In response to a question connecting Iran with the crisis in Syria, Foreign Minister Westerwelle commented, “It’s obvious of course that Iran meddles in Syria’s affairs more than any of us would wish. It’s most regrettable, too, that with its veto in the Security Council Russia has placed itself on the wrong side of history.” (2012a)

As the civil war continued with no resolution in sight, he was later asked a more pointed question regarding his disappointment with Russia’s stance on the civil war in Syria, to which he responded, “Of course I am disappointed with Russia’s stance. Even with a view to Russia’s

national interests, this is not a convincing position.” (Westerwelle, 2013b) While events in Syria continued, Russian actions in Ukraine shifted much of the focus of German rhetoric there, reducing the attention to multilateralism.

Beyond these multilateral perspectives and closer to home, the European Union offers a significant institutional venue for German-Russian relations: the European Union. Once the reserved domain of states, foreign policy has become a significant aspect of the European Union as well. Rhetoric related to the EU-Russian relationship showed particular salience in 2007 and 2010, at which points European countries sought to solidify the partnership. The dialogue from an interview with Chancellor Merkel in 2007 shows the German perspective favoring a multilateral approach to relations:

“[Sueddeutsche Zeitung] Is there actually any uniform European perception of Russia? East European states in particular do have a different interpretation of Russia's attitudes to that of Germany.

[Merkel] What is important is that the European Union should come across as a community in its encounters with Russia. Europe will only succeed through commonality.” (Kornelius and Winter, 2007)

Following a brief downturn in EU-Russian relations and stalled discussions regarding a partnership following the Russo-Georgian war, the multinational focus returned. Following German-Russian intergovernmental talks, the Chancellor's office noted, “[t]he Chancellor described Russia's accession to the WTO as ‘desirable’. The next step in closer relations with Russia will, however, be the new Partnership Agreement between the EU and Russia” (Chancellor, 2010). Later that year, Minister of State Hoyer expressed the idea more

clearly, “The European Union needs Russia just as Russia needs the European Union. This holds true not only in the business sphere and regarding energy security, but also in the sphere of security policy” (2010).

Shifting away from the role of institutions and exogenously defined interests to that of preferences reveals regular German concern with domestic priorities as described by the liberal perspective. As shown in figure 15, discourse reflecting a bilateral relationship based on various forms of interconnectedness and/or referring to interstate economic ties maintained a regular presence, generally undeterred by international events. In contrast to rhetoric related to other liberal themes that maintained a relatively consistent presence over time, discussions concerning modernization clearly became more significant during the later years in this study.



Figure 15 — Liberal themes in German discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

Interdependence and economic concerns showed a high degree of salience in both 2004 and 2005. Following German-Russian consultations in 2004, Chancellor Schroeder summarized the events, “Yesterday [21 December], seven documents were signed...following the conclusion of the seventh Russian-German interstate consultations. ‘Our relations have reached an unprecedented depth and breadth.’” (Vorobyev and Petrov, 2004), indicating an ever-increasing sense of connections across multiple domains¹³. Soon after, he reiterated his assessment of the relationship, “Since the sea change of 1989/90, we have managed to remodel our relations with Russia and moved away from Cold War confrontation towards ever more comprehensive cooperation – in political, security and economic terms.” (Schroeder, 2005) Subsequent years saw a relative decline in this rhetoric although it remained one of the three most frequent themes until 2014. The texts reveal a spike in these discussions again in 2010 which was a year of heightened interstate dialogue in general. Foreign Minister Westerwelle returns to the discourse seen above: “Today our relations rest on a solid and broad foundation: our economic ties have acquired an intensity unknown in earlier times.” (Westerwelle, 2010b) That year revealed a two-fold increase in references to the Russo-German economic relationship. Every year after that, however, saw a decrease in discourse about economics. Discussions of interdependence rose and fell moderately over the course of time under consideration but emerged significantly in 2011 before declining again to typical levels.

As seen already in the realist discussions, German policy makers frequently referred to their relationship with Russia as a partnership, often as a ‘strategic’ one. While sometimes exclusively a security-related reference, this idea also appears in the context of bilateral

¹³ The documents to which he is referring outlined cooperation in the areas of human rights, cultural and political exchange.

economic relations, similar to the discourse discussed above, only slightly more explicit in this case. This rhetoric constitutes the dominant liberal theme between 2006 and 2008. Soon after the new coalition government took office in 2005, Foreign Minister Steinmeier noted in an interview “the remarkable political and economic transformation process Russia has undergone over the past 15 years. Russia has become a reliable, indispensable international partner” (2006a). Following a quiet year, partnership references reemerged in 2010 as the second most frequent topic reflecting liberal perspectives and again in 2012-13 as the predominant one. During increased tensions between the two countries as a result of German concerns over political freedoms on Russia, policy makers remained committed however to adhering to the notion of a strategic economic partnership, as Prime Minister Westerwelle asserted, “Europe, Germany and Russia are committed in partnership. Never before have our economies and societies been so closely intertwined” (2012c).

Finally, a liberal theme focused on Russian modernization, relating to both economics and politics, first appeared briefly in 2006 and again in 2008 but after each of these instances fell away. Early in her first term as chancellor, Merkel remarked, “The Russian economy is going through a period of very steady modernization, and we have an interest in this process continuing," she noted” (ITAR-TASS, 2006). Keeping with the pattern observed above, this subject reemerged in 2010 to a great extent and was even more prominent in 2012 before dropping again to a more moderate level. At the time, Foreign Minister Westerwelle commented, “We want to support [Russian] efforts to modernize, thus creating a common area of prosperity, rule of law, security and freedom.” (2010c) Once more in 2012 he echoed the same sentiment, “They [Russia] are part of a partnership geared to the modernization of the economy, society and

the judiciary, which has become even more necessary in the face of globalization.” (Westerwelle, 2012c)

Examining the texts from a constructivist perspective reveals a distinctly different pattern, as shown in Figure 16. For the majority of years considered, language emblematic of constructivist themes was almost completely absent yet nevertheless at times it dominated the discourse. First, as discovered with statements associated with the structural realist themes, the texts reveal an almost complete lack of references to identity, with only one reference in 2003 and another in 2014. Dialogue based on international norms, however, reveals distinct patterns. With the exception of human rights, norms-based rhetoric referring to topics such as international law and appropriate state behaviors appears almost exclusively during the conflict

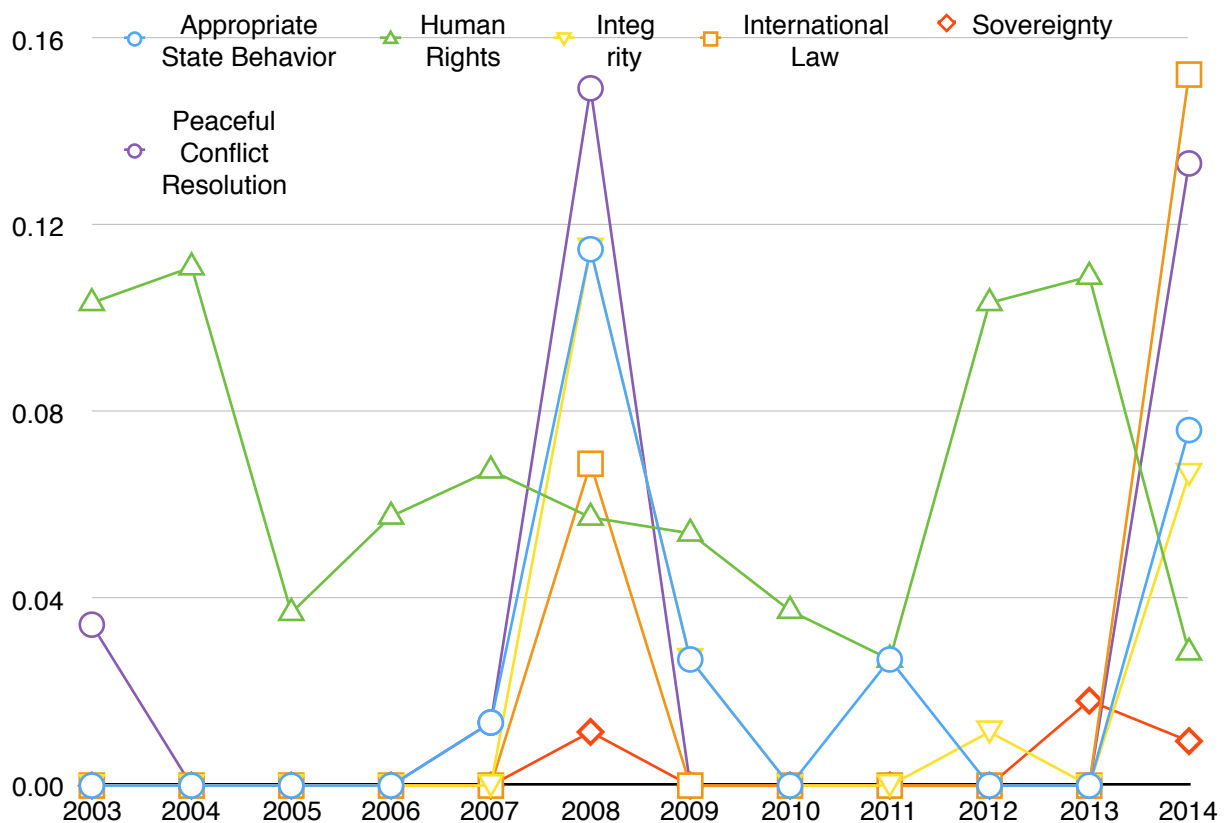


Figure 16 — German constructivist themes over time (% total annual discourse)

period of 2008 and 2014 at which times references to all associated themes explode. Discussions relating to international law and peaceful conflict resolution appear exclusively in those two years while references to appropriate state behavior, sovereignty, and territorial integrity make single, infrequent appearances over time.

In response to the Russo-Georgian war, German policy makers exhibited a strong focus on peaceful resolution to the conflict. Both the chancellor and her foreign minister rapidly responded to the Russian intervention as their offices reported: "The chancellor expressed once again her great concern about the further escalation of the situation in Georgia and the dramatic consequences for the suffering civilian population." Similarly, the German Foreign Office noted that "Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke with his Russian and Georgian counterparts and also called for an 'immediate end to the hostilities'" (AFP, 2008a). Commenting on the need for a long term solution, Merkel again mentioned, "The aim now must be to find a political solution to the fifteen-year-old conflict, and not to indulge in mutual recriminations. The problem must no longer be shelved, or open conflict is likely to erupt." (Chancellor, 2008a) These statements from German policy makers reveal their preference to avoiding violent means of conflict resolution and reaching mutually acceptable solutions through negotiated political settlement instead.

At the same time, much of the reaction of German policy makers made reference to international law. Upon hearing of the Russian parliament's moves toward recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Merkel "said she was 'deeply concerned' about the Russian parliament's vote on independence for and acceptance of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 'It contravenes international law', she said" (Chancellor, 2008b). Foreign minister Steinmeier

cast the Russian annexation of Crimea in an identical light in 2014. In discussing German moves toward sanctions, he noted, “We have responded emphatically to Russia’s action, which violates international law” (Steinmeier, 2014c).

German rhetoric also found a footing in international expectations of state behavior in both crisis situations. In 2008, with regard to expectations for Russian compliance with the Six-Point Plan, the chancellor’s spokesman noted,

“she ‘believes that when one signs an agreement . . . then one should then stick to the obligations that they have made.’ So it is clear that in the course of today (Monday) and the coming days the Russians should withdraw their troops from Georgia” (AFP, 2008b) She subsequently expressed her disapproval of Russian actions in Georgia, “calling Russia’s response to actions by Georgia in South Ossetia “disproportionate” (ITAR-TASS, 2008b).

When conflict emerged again in 2014, German policy makers resurrected this language pertaining to appropriate state behavior. Following the crash of Malaysia Air flight MH17, Foreign Minister Steinmeier remarked, noting the need for a ‘reasonable’ policy,

Those who are responsible for hundreds of people dying in a plane which was in all likelihood shot down must be brought to justice. We take an equally serious tone when discussing how to overcome the current crisis and how to bring Russia round to a reasonable policy, one that takes responsibility for peace in Europe. (2014d)

The sum of this discourse reveals the German perspective on appropriate behavior of a modern state of great power stature. Specifically, rather than violence, great powers should pursue policies that promote peace and stability. In addition, states ought to follow through on their commitments such as those pledged in cease-fire agreements. Finally, when resorting to

violence, powerful states must not employ their power excessively. The rhetoric points to the need to make decisions based on logics of appropriateness rather than consequences. German speakers here are not critiquing Russian actions based on their impacts on Germany but rather their coherence with the expectations of powerful states.

Furthermore, similar to Merkel's call for the implementation of the cease-fire in Georgia, Steinmeier notes the necessity of complying with an international agreement in 2014 with regard to elections in eastern Ukraine:

“There is a very great danger that holding these [Ukrainian] elections will result in renewed tensions. It is clear to us that the elections are a clear violation of the Minsk ceasefire agreements, which is why we will not recognize them. Russia must live up to its great responsibility in this most important issue” (2014e).”

In addition, German policy makers made frequent reference to the international norm of respecting a state's territorial integrity. Once again responding to the decision by the Duma to recognize the breakaway republics, Merkel "urge[d] Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev not to sign the resolution" because it "would violate Georgia's territorial integrity" (Chancellor, 2008b). While Germany reestablished routine bilateral relations with Russia soon after the war, Merkel held the line with regard to Georgia, reiterating that "Georgia's territorial integrity is not negotiable" (Chancellor, 2008c). Six years later, Foreign Minister Steinmeier would echoed the same sentiment, this time with respect to Ukraine, asserting that the annexation of Crimea "violate[s] the central foundations of the European framework for peace" because Russia is "attempt[ing] to redraw internationally recognized borders in our European neighborhood" (2014b).

Unlike the normative concerns referenced above, discourse on human rights makes regular, noticeable appearances. The presence of this rhetoric is frequently based on internal Russian events such as the handling of journalists and opposition politicians as well as internal unrest such as during the fighting in Chechnya. German policy makers consistently highlighted their promotion of human rights in their dealings with their Russian counterparts. During the 2004 violence in Chechnya, Foreign Minister Fischer emphasized, “We have always insisted on human rights observance in Chechnya, the condemnation of those who violate them, and the need for a peaceful solution within the Russian Federation to the benefit of the Chechen majority” (Fischer, 2003). His successor likewise defended his dealings with Russia against charges of ignoring Russian violations of human rights, as he avowed “on my visits to Russia, human rights issues, especially the treatment of non-governmental organizations, were always a topic I discussed there” (Steinmeier, 2006b). In 2012, spurred on by the trial of punk rock group Pussy Riot, Germans paid significant attention to state of human rights in Russia. In an interview, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy described the German approach:

Well, we urge our Russian partners again and again to comply with Council of Europe standards. Russia is a member of the Council of Europe, it has signed the European Convention on Human Rights and is thus obligated to meet these standards. And it’s up to the other members of the Council of Europe to go on reminding the Russians that they have to comply with the standards to which they voluntarily committed themselves. (Löning, 2012)

The following year, Foreign Minister Westerwelle bluntly offered his opinion, asserting “The recent events and the way that civil society is treated in Russia are depressing” (Westerwelle, 2013b).

This concern was not limited to internal Russian dynamics, however. It also emerged in the discourse related to events in Georgia. Resisting calls to assign blame for the conflict in its immediate aftermath, Merkel commented, “now is not the time to analyze the genesis of the conflict - the sides are doing that. What matters most at the moment is to stop the firing and ensure security for the civilians” (Interfax, 2008)

Finally, I consider the presence of rhetoric related to the state of democracy in Russia because of its tie to democratic peace theory. Compared to other themes, democracy makes relatively infrequent appearances in the discourse, although a general pattern does emerge, as shown in Figure 17.

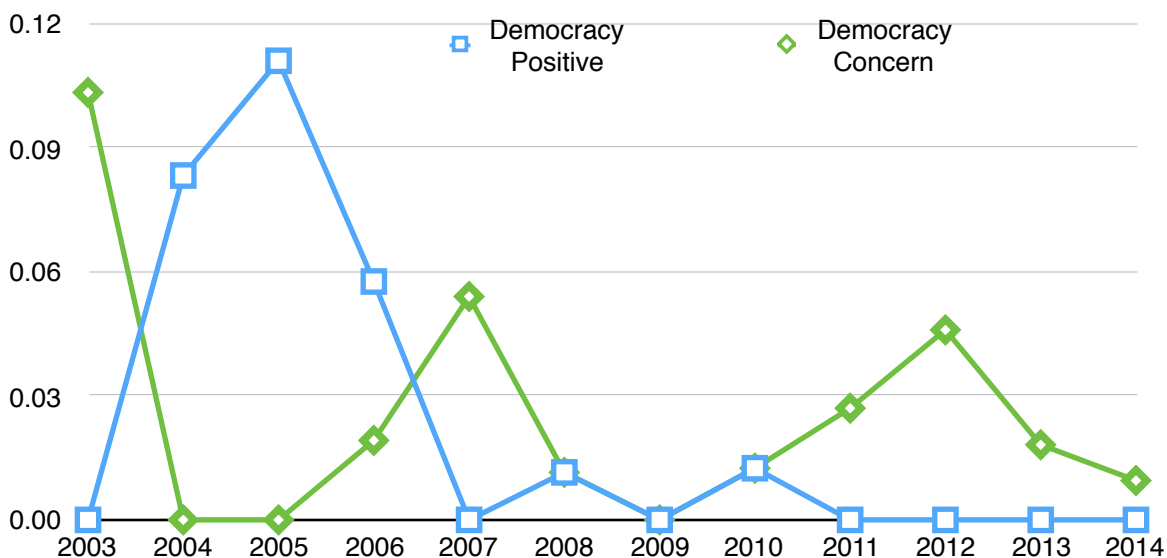


Figure 17 — Democracy themes in German discourse over time (% total annual discourse)

Similar to evaluations of multilateral discourse, rhetoric associated with democracy can be either positive or negative. In the early years of this study, German policy makers referred to Russian democracy exclusively in a positive light. In 2004, Chancellor Schroeder remarked, “I regard Vladimir Putin as a man who wants to restructure Russia to become a real democratic society, counting on a very close relationship with the West” (Schroeder, 2004) The following year he reinforced his claim, asserting “The fact that Russia, as a country with no real democratic traditions of its own, decided of its own accord to follow a democratic path, cannot but inspire respect among us” (Krumrey, Poertner, and Weigold, 2005)

The rhetoric in 2006 revealed the greatest references to democracy of any year covered in this study and included discourse in support and critical of Russia’s domestic politics. In 2007 the affirmative references disappeared entirely whereas the negative increased. Prior to the elections of 2007, subsequent to German-Russian intergovernmental consultations, one German official demurred that “The German side "has no intention to interfere in internal affairs or political contests in Russia. However, ‘we as democracy, as deputies’ support political competition and development upon a free basis” Moreover, he offered a very pointed characterization of interstate relations, avowing “This [free, open democracy] is a basis for the success of further political cooperation between Russia and Germany, including at a parliamentary level” (Interfax, 2007). Later that year, again prior to the elections, Foreign Minister Steinmeier frankly expressed his assessment of Russian politics, asserting that “Russia is not a model democracy.” (Best, von Hammerstein, Neukirch, and Schep, 2007). Following Russian elections that year, “a government spokesman in Berlin said Germany did not believe

the landslide victory of Putin's ruling United Russia party had been achieved by free or fair means” (AFP, 2007).

Subsequent years saw singular expressions of support for democracy in 2008 and 2010 before disappearing from the dialogue altogether while discussions noting concern remained in the discourse, except for 2009 when no German speakers referred to Russian democracy at all. The negative aspect of the theme emerged most prominently in 2012, an election year. Reacting to OSCE reports on the conduct of Russian elections, Westerwelle suggested that “these assessments show that Russia “still has a long way to go on the road to rule of law and democracy” (Federal Foreign Office, 2012).

In general, pertaining to the issue of democracy, mixed (positive and negative) discourse appears in the first half of the study while only critical comments emerge in the latter half. More significantly, the greatest spikes in negative rhetoric about Russian democracy come in the election years of 2007 and 2012.

Preeminent discourses — tracing the most salient German rhetoric over time

The examination of the salience of each set of themes by year can provide additional insights into the motivations for German foreign policy, including in the years of 2008 and 2014. As might be expected, themes appear salient in German discourse in any given year correspond to the bi-lateral and multi-lateral issues dominating German foreign relations and discussed in the first section of this chapter. Figure 18 provides a graphic view of the relationship between theoretical categories over time.

During the first year considered, 2003, the discourse reveals both areas of cooperation as well as opposition between Germany and Russia. The most salient discourse reflected an

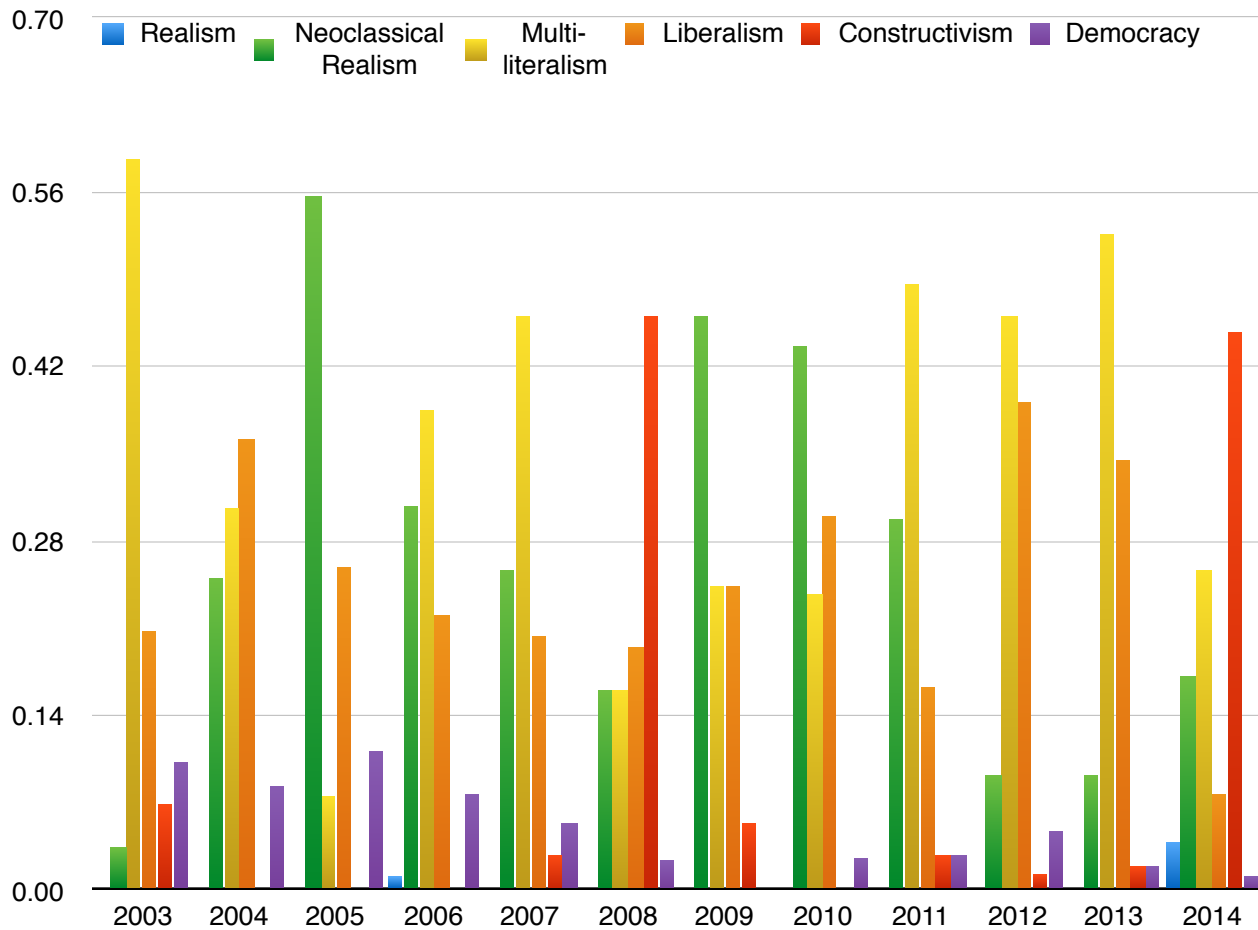


Figure 18 — German themes over time (% total annual discourse)

institutionalist focus on multilateral solutions to international problems as a result of the ongoing quest to resolve the crisis in Iraq. At the same time, German attention to the Russian crackdown in Chechnya led to increased rhetoric related to human rights issues. Despite additional concerns about the state of democracy in Russia, German rhetoric did not demonstrate confrontation but support on the basis of shared opposition to US unilateral with respect to Iraq.

The rhetoric of the following year demonstrated similar priorities. Although not as dominant, the institutional perspective maintained its prominence in the discourse, which is surprising in light of the overwhelming priority of bilateral discussions in 2004. However, a wide variety of other topics, primarily international attention to events in Ukraine as well as an

increase in attention to the MEPP, led to multilateral concerns remaining at the forefront. At the same time, the discussions also revealed significant cooperation associated with liberal and neoclassical realist expectations. As a result of a greater number of bilateral interactions, economics and interdependence emerged as substantive issues. Equally prominent are discussions reinforcing concerns about energy security and areas of shared interest. Finally, this year saw a complete turnaround in the democracy discourse from opposition to even greater support.

The following year saw a marked change in both issues and themes. With the US situation in Iraq out of the hands of most European countries and the resolution of the political crisis in Ukraine came a precipitous decline in issues requiring international attention and the concomitant rise in bilateral focus. As a result, rhetoric relating to institutional perspectives declined significantly in 2005. In its place, neoclassical realist themes became the most salient, significantly dominating other themes. The dominance of this approach reveals a focus on interests in the areas of energy and regional security and policy makers' desire for cooperation with Russia in these areas, which would be contrary to a strict structural explanation because of the increased influence and relative power of Russia in the system. Similarly, evidence for interstate relations based on liberal concerns remains salient. Despite a small relative decline from the previous year, discourse related to liberal themes was the next most frequent with rhetoric about democracy emerging as another notable set of themes, replacing multilateralism. All three of these perspectives reflect the significant impact of domestic forces on the conduct of German foreign policy and offer support for either liberal or neoclassical realist explanations.

The rhetoric of 2006 supports explanations of cooperation based on institutional concerns, energy security interest, and liberal priorities, although that year brought about another re-ordering in the prominence of themes. The importance of multilateralism returned as the preeminent focus of German-Russian relations as a result of increased cooperation on the Iranian nuclear issue and the MEPP as well as an increase in dialogue about EU-Russian relations. As a result of the gas crisis in Ukraine, rhetoric reflecting neoclassical realist views also remained salient, led by a focus on energy security. Discourse reflecting both liberal and democracy concerns continued to decline although not dramatically. Furthermore, German discussions of Russian democracy remained overwhelmingly positive, reaching their highest point.

These patterns of cooperation between Germany and Russia continued through 2007, despite changes in priority of issues. Discourse focused on institutional priorities became even more dominant than in 2006, despite the priority of energy as a topic. As a result of increased attention to EU-Russia relations and the MEPP as well as a continued concern with Iran's nuclear program, German rhetoric was dominated by multilateral discussions. Alternatively, the discourse reflected a significant amount of attention related to neoclassical realist concerns, specifically energy and regional security. Once again, discussions reflecting liberal and democracy concerns declined in salience. Of note, however, is that perspectives on democracy in Russia once again shifted dramatically, once again becoming entirely unfavorable; this time due to their elections.

The war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 dramatically altered the relative dominance of themes, although its occurrence later in the year allowed certain other discussions to emerge as well. Leading up to the conflict in August, German-Russian interactions manifested a similar

pattern as prior years, reflecting a significant amount of rhetoric related to institutionalist, neoclassical realist as well as liberal perspectives. Without the war in Georgia, the dominant dialogue would have continued to focus on multilateral concerns, led by continued EU-Russia dialogue. The levels of bilateral interaction increased from the previous year, resulting in continued presence of neoclassical realist and liberal-related discourse. The latter remained as prominent as in 2007, the only topic, other than constructivist ones, that did not decrease. However, the response to the Russo-Georgian war thrust constructivist themes to the fore, reflecting the entire range of constructivist considerations from international law, to territorial integrity, to human rights concerns. Despite a cease-fire negotiated by French President Sarkozy, serving as President of the EU at the time, German discourse did not demonstrate any concern or preference for a multilateral solution.

Following an acceptable cease-fire plan, German rhetoric regarding Russia reflected more traditional priorities. In 2009, as prior issues such as bilateral relations and energy (as a result of another energy conflict between Russian and Ukraine) regained their prominence, so neoclassical rhetoric resumed its dominant position. Rhetoric reflecting concerns with the need (or desire) for Russian cooperation in the areas of energy security and regional security suggests that German policy makers sought to articulate why they were not opposing increases in Russian assertiveness. From another perspective, the liberal rhetoric increased in salience as a result of the return to a bilateral focus.

The next year saw the same perspectives reflected in the rhetoric with a change in the order of the second and third most salient perspectives. Rhetoric revealing neoclassical realist considerations remained preeminent based on the strength of increased attention to regional

security which offset a dramatic decline in energy security discourse as a result of the EU's energy security plan put in place following the previous year's energy scare. Despite an overall decline in purely bilateral interaction, rhetoric reflecting liberal priorities increased in prominence on the strength of a dramatic increase in references to a German-Russian strategic partnership. Interest in multilateral institutional remained noticeable primarily based on NATO-Russia discussions related to missile defense in Europe.

These three sets of themes dominated the discourse in the following years as well, albeit in continually shifting prominence. In 2011, multilateralism returned to its predominant position among the dialogue. Thanks to continued focus on interactions with Russia via international organizations, namely the EU and NATO, coupled with continued concern with the Iranian nuclear issue and the MEPP, policy makers' statements demonstrated a dominant concern for an institutional perspective. Invigorated efforts to create venues for cooperation demonstrate western nations' desires to develop multilateral venues for coordination that could increase cooperation and prevent conflict with Russia in the future, lending support to an institutionalist explanation for German-Russian relations. Discourse reflecting a neoclassical realist perspective declined but remained prominent as German policy makers continued to emphasize Russia's contributions to regional security. In contrast to previous years, liberal-related discussions declined, as attention to bilateral topics declined at the expense of NATO-Russia focus.

While the most salient rhetoric remained the same in 2012, noticeable shifts occurred in the less salient perspectives. With the conflict in Syria gaining international attention, multilateral discourse sustained the primacy of the institutional approach, despite a dramatic reduction in attention to previously significant topics such as NATO-Russia cooperation.

Discussions reflecting liberal concerns rose dramatically from the previous year as German policy makers strongly emphasized their desires for Russian strategic partnership and hopes for Russian modernization. At the same time, language associated with neorealism declined steeply, continuing the trend begun in 2010. Just as energy security concerns dramatically declined so also had discussions promoting the positive role that Russia was playing or could play in regional security. Discourse consistent with constructivist explanations emerged again. The increase in the salience of liberal themes is attributable to a noticeable increase in German discussions centered on Russia's modernization and the two countries' interdependence; constructivist rhetoric rose in prominence as a result of German concerns with domestic political issues in Russia, both of which came at the expense of neoclassical realist concerns regarding regional and energy security. Of note, since Russian elections took place in 2012, this year also contained an appreciable amount of dialogue concerning Russian democracy—all of it negative. After virtually disappearing as a topic since 2007 (another election year in which all statements expressed concern), Russian democracy once again emerged as a topic of discussion.

The discourse from 2013 demonstrated consistent ranking of emphases from 2012 although the relative frequencies and topics changed noticeably. By far, the institutionalist focus on multilateral interactions dominated the statements of German foreign policy makers, which is understandable given the overwhelming focus on the conflict in Syria. While disagreeing with Russian actions, Germany continued to highlight the need for a multilateral solution to the conflict that included Russia. At the same time, rhetoric promoting liberal ideas dropped noticeably as German policy makers spoke less about any of the themes reflecting a liberal basis for interaction. For the first time since 2008, rhetoric reflecting a constructivist approach made a

significant appearance in the discussions as well, this time focused on German concerns with human rights issues related to the conflict in Syria.

Subsequently, Russian actions again led to dramatic shifts in German rhetoric toward Russia. The seizure of Crimea and support for the separatist movements in eastern Ukraine brought about a predictable reorientation of German dialogue similar to their reaction to the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. Once again, constructivist themes of all types, except human rights, dramatically increased in frequency while rhetoric reflecting the previously predominant perspectives dropped precipitously. For its part, human rights dialogue shifted from discussions pertaining to Syria to those concerned with Ukraine.

Discussion — assessing the Germany findings

To what extent do these findings reveal the motivations behind German foreign policy decisions? As discussed at the outset, various theoretical approaches offer potential explanations of the observed foreign policy decisions, i.e., first to abstain from sanctions in 2008 and then to support sanctions in 2014. In evaluating these hypotheses, it is necessary to compare the discourse across time in order to account for a change in behavior. In other words, were there changes in discourse that account for the change in motivations behind the foreign policy behavior?

When considering the years in isolation, the texts demonstrate certain patterns of behavior clearly. Conflicts in which Russia was a party generated distinctly different responses than those to which it was an outside entity. For all years except the conflict years, 2008 and 2014, rhetoric reflecting constructivist a perspective is essentially absent from German foreign policy discussions. However, in the time periods including Russian interventions, the discourse overwhelmingly manifests discourse suggestive of a constructivist approach to German foreign

policy based on normative concerns such as human rights, international law, and maintaining territorial and sovereignty of states rather than rhetoric related to multilateralism or neoclassical realist perspectives. At the same time, conflicts or issues geographically removed from Europe and to which both Russia and European countries were third parties or jointly in opposition such as the Iranian nuclear weapons program, the Middle East Peace Process, and the civil war in Syria, overwhelmingly elicited rhetoric reflecting an institutional perspective.

Table 7 - Changes in German discourse (2008-14) If the dominant discourse cannot account for changes in

Variable (theme)	Change in frequency	the observed behaviors, it is necessary to consider other
Neorealism	N/A	factors that may have varied over time, including patterns
Neoclassical Realism	=	of interaction that may not be apparent when merely
Institutionalism	+	considering the two years of conflict. Table 7 summarizes
Liberalism	—	the change in emphasis of theoretical perspectives
Constructivism	=	between 2008 and 2014.
Democracy	—	The data fail to support structural realist motivations for

German interactions with Russia. German rhetoric is essentially void of any mention of polarity and power; there is no mention of interest in multipolarity or concern of American unipolarity.

Neither do the statements reflect any concern with changes in Russian capabilities. From the evidence presented, parsimonious explanations based exclusively on changes in the balance of power within the international system cannot account for German foreign policies. Therefore, hypothesis one must be rejected. Similarly, evidence in support of an identity-based motive behind German foreign policy is almost entirely absent. With an appearance in the discourse only twice, and found in neither period of conflict, the rhetoric fails to suggest either cooperation

based on shared identity or opposition based on conflicting identities. Therefore, hypothesis five can also be rejected.

In contrast to the lack of evidence of purely systemic imperatives, there is ample support for the suggestion that German policy makers considered a wide array of additional security interests such as energy security, shared interests, and regional security, when formulating responses to various issues. This discourse trailed only constructivist and multilateral speech in frequency. Neoclassical realist explanations reflect interest in factors that mitigate expected balancing or bandwagoning behavior, which appeared regularly and were highly salient across the years considered for this study due to prioritization of regional and energy security. At the same time, the related dialogue, while still notable during the conflict years, remained relatively the same, manifesting a basic continuity. While these issues remained salient to policy makers, given the consistency in both frequency and tone, attention to non-systemic security concerns cannot account for the different policy responses. Therefore, hypothesis two can be rejected.

Language reflecting institutionalist considerations dominated most years and appeared prominently in the discourse during the conflict years, exceeded only by constructivist rhetoric in both 2008 and 2014. Moreover, as a percentage of the overall dialogue, appeals to multilateralism increased between these two years. This change points to greater emphasis on multilateral solutions with respect to Ukraine, which is contrary to predicted behavior. As discussed at the outset, a decrease in institutional discourse would account for the shift in policy from cooperation to confrontation. Alternatively, an increase in cooperation would be expected to yield less coercive behavior over time.

As with the French case, the fact that an institutional approach contains both positive and negative components necessitates additional consideration. A closer look at this explanation allows separating the components of this category and considering the individual themes to consider the impact of these factors on German decision makers. As noted above, multilateral discourse appeared noticeably more frequently in 2014 than in 2008. On the surface this might be easily explained by the simple fact that the crisis in Georgia lasted only a few months while that in Ukraine occurred throughout almost the entire year. While there was obviously more opportunity for German policy makers to comment on the latter situation, the specific issues contained in their statements reveals more about their thinking. Much of the rhetoric reflecting multilateral concern relates to issues other than Georgia or Ukraine. In 2008, only 4 out of 13 texts pertain to the conflict in Georgia; the rest focus on topics such as regional security (separate from the Caucasus), energy, climate, and EU-Russia relations, specifically the renewing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. In 2014, slightly over half of the documents discuss the situation in Ukraine, with almost all of the remainder concerned with Iran or Syria.

While the frequency of multilateral references may have changed, the nature or tone did not. The reactions of German foreign policy makers remained the same in each situation. In the statements related to the conflict in Georgia, the texts reveal a frustration with Russia's failure to adhere to the terms of the Six Point Plan, more specifically, their failure to redeploy troops to previous positions. Subsequently, the rhetoric concerning Ukraine demonstrates a frustration with Russia's failure to comply with a multilaterally-preferred solution. In this case, German policy makers continued to express disappointment with Russia's unwillingness to halt the flow of heavy weapons to separatists. Considering the individual components of the multilateralist

perspective as well as the topics around which the discourse revolved reveals little difference between the frequency of multilateral discussions and, more significantly, no difference between the perspectives of the decision makers. Lacking a difference in dialogue between the two cases, the multilateralist perspective fails to account for change in policy decisions so hypothesis three can be rejected.

On the contrary, liberal perspectives, do show a noticeable change. Trailing only rhetoric concerned with constructivist themes in 2008, discussions regarding the economy, interdependence, modernization, and partnership drops off during 2014, noticeably lagging behind other theoretical explanations. This change in salience of liberal perspectives conforms to the theoretical expectations since a decrease in these concerns would facilitate greater confrontation based on changes in domestic priorities. Rather than being subject to economic or other material concerns, policy would be the result of other preferences to which sanctions contributed or at least would not inhibit. As a result, hypothesis four cannot be rejected.

As mentioned above, evidence from the conflict years reveals a predominant discourse based on international norms, as argued by the constructivist perspective and articulated in hypothesis five. While regularly present at low levels, this rhetoric replaces the typical focuses on state interests or institutional interactions following Russian interventions. At first glance, this fact appears to offer a satisfactory explanation based on the identification of a dominant discourse. Yet, the paucity of discourse prior to and its presence only subsequent to Russian interventions suggests that this is not a regular source of Russo-German interactions. Moreover, similar discursive patterns are associated with opposite foreign policy behaviors, meaning

normative concerns by themselves cannot account for change in behavior. Therefore, with no change in this independent variable, hypothesis 6 can be rejected.

The final perspective under consideration is based on the democratic peace logic, which forms the basis of hypothesis seven. In general, discourse related to Russian democracy appears infrequently. As described above, in only two years, 2003 and 2005, under consideration did this topic represent at least 10% of German foreign policy statements concerning Russia. When looking at the years in which Russian interventions occur, dialogue on democracy appears twice in 2008 and only once in 2014. In the former, the discourse contains both support for and concern with Russian democracy while in the latter, only discussions reflecting concern appears. The paucity of rhetoric found in the conflict years directly addressing the state of democracy in Russia initially suggests that this hypothesis should also be rejected. However, expanding the aperture beyond the immediate timeframe surrounding the conflicts yields an informative picture of German foreign policy motivations as discussed below.

In sum, the initial round of analysis suggests that several hypotheses based on norms, institutions, and structural considerations can be rejected based on the analysis only of conflict years. At the same time, two potential hypotheses—liberalist perspectives stemming from economic concerns and the democratic peace theory based on the perception of democracy in Russia—remain as potential explanations for the two German foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, looking at patterns over time also offers insight into the motivations behind actions taken in response to Russian interventions. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the data more closely.

Turning again to the case of liberalism reduces the differences between time periods. As mentioned above, liberal themes decreased in frequency between 2008 and 2014. However, splitting the year 2008 into pre- and post-conflict time periods permits a better understanding of German policy makers' actions. In the months prior to August, discourse reflecting liberal considerations appears as frequently as that related to the institutionalist perspective and is predominant. However, following the war, other themes consistent with liberal arguments marked decrease trailing discussions associated with constructivist, neoclassical realist, and institutional explanations, a salience equal to that of 2014. Therefore, between the two conflict periods there is no difference in liberal rhetoric. Following Russian interventions, German speech manifested equal amounts of concern with issues emblematic of liberal assertions.

Finally, I expand the investigation to include years beyond 2008 and 2014 to consider additional patterns in the data, specifically the German perception of Russian democracy. As discussed earlier, rhetoric reflecting rationalist perspectives (realism, institutionalism, and liberalism) ebb and flow over time but do not conform to theoretical expectations. At the same time, constructivist explanations based on normative concerns emerge in reaction to events and fail to demonstrate any regular influence on German foreign policy. However, looking at the pattern of discourse regarding the German considerations of the trajectory of Russian democracy, reveals a distinct difference between the years preceding and succeeding the Georgia conflict. More specifically, in the early years under consideration German policy makers made frequent positive reference to Russian democracy. However, beginning in 2009, only once did rhetoric in support of Russian appear and that at the same time as an expression of concern. In the following years, German policy makers neglect to make a single positive reference regarding Russian

democracy while consistently expressing concern about it. Borrowing from the liberal focus on modernization may reinforce this perspective as well. Since modernization includes both economic and political components which imply that modern institutions are western institutions, discourse promoting Russian modernization insinuates that such institutions do not yet exist. In other words, if German policy makers are emphasizing the need for improvements in the Russian political and economic spheres, then they are concerned with the current state or the progress in those areas. Looking at the course of rhetoric concerning modernization reveals another distinct pattern that matches the flow of democratic discourse. Through the year 2010, discourse related to modernization is minimal whereas beginning in that year, German policy makers frequently express a need for Russian modernization, inherently demonstrating a need for change in current institutions or a need for a change in trajectory of the course of reforms.

When considering the range of theoretically-derived explanations for disparate foreign policy choices, it is not possible strictly to examine the dominant discourse. Rather it is necessary to determine which, if any, discourse changes over time and whether this change can account for changes in behavior. In the case of German reactions to Russian interventions in Georgia and Russia, the constructivist discourse dominates. However, given the continuity across cases, normative motivations cannot independently account for different policies. Likewise, institutionalist concerns, while relatively salient in the conflict years, remained the same. Furthermore, a liberal perspective, focused on discussions about economics, partnership, and modernization, failed to demonstrate sufficient change over time. Ultimately, the discourse points only to explanations consistent with the democratic peace logic, which was manifest in a noticeable pattern from 2003 to 2014.

Conclusions

Having looked at the French and German case studies individually, I will consider them together to draw some combined conclusions. First, I briefly review the key aspects of this study, such as the motivating issue and theoretical explanations, after which I compare the separate findings and discuss how these relate to the theoretical gaps identified in chapter one. I will end by further noting ways that these findings could be reconsidered and expanded.

Reviewing the puzzle

This study has been motivated by the observation of an empirical puzzle whereby France and Germany, in conjunction with their fellow EU countries, adopted opposite foreign policies when confronted with highly similar situations. More specifically, following the Russian intervention in Georgia in 2008, they chose not to sanction Russia, despite their objections to Russian actions. On the other hand, in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and material support for ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine, France and Germany supported the implementation of sanctions against Russia. While not identical, these situations provide a basis for comparing both states' reactions over time to identify patterns in foreign policy decision making to reveal motivations behind French and German foreign policy. Admittedly, some differences appear significant, namely the difference in territorial size as well as economic activity. At the same time, both of the states represent former members of the Soviet Union whose orientations were shifting westward, a change that disturbed Russia. More importantly, the actions taken in response, namely, Russian military intervention in the territory of internationally recognized states without their permission, forms the primary impetus for action.

The question that emerges from these situations, then, is: why did France and Germany abstain from sanctions in 2008 but implement them in 2014?

Methodology review

As a basis for answering this question, I developed a number of plausible explanations based on prominent theories of international relations and/or foreign policy. The neorealist perspective suggests an explanation based on different changes in international structure between the cases, forcing these states to endeavor to restore balance through the implementation sanctions. From a neoclassical realist point of view emerged the possibility that mitigating domestic concerns declined across the years, removing obstacles to respond to systemic changes, allowing France and Germany to exhibit balancing behaviors. An institutionalist account inspired an account based on decreasing reliance on international institutions between cases, preventing all sides from arriving at a coordinated solution short of sanctioning in 2014. Liberal concerns with economics likewise indicate that the changes in foreign policy behavior stemmed from a decrease in economic interaction over time. Alternatively, a constructivist perspective based on adherence to international norms proposes that France and Germany interpreted Russian action in 2008 as more legitimate while finding their activities in 2014 in (more) serious violation of international expectations. Finally, an explanation founded on the democratic peace logic suggested that differences between French and German foreign policies were the result of a change in their assessment of Russia, treating it as a democracy in 2008 but as a non-democracy in 2014. Each of these theoretical explanations generated a testable hypothesis to be analyzed through discourse analysis of statements by each country's foreign policy makers.

Conclusions compared

The analysis of discourses of French and German politicians revealed similar bases on which each country interacted with Russia—a combination of bilateral and multilateral issues. Over time, each country sought to increase connections with Russia in economic, political, and cultural terms. In addition, as active, influential regional states, all three countries played a role in prominent international issues such as Iraq’s WMD program, Iran’s nuclear efforts, or the Israeli-Palestine conflict, as well as regional issues such as the independence of Kosovo and frozen conflicts in the Caucasus.

In both cases, the empirical data manifested discourse related to each of the theoretical perspectives to a certain extent. Table eight summarizes the findings of both cases and compares them with the theoretically-derived explanations. Comparing the findings between the two countries reveals additional similarities as well. Two sets of predominant discourses emerge in both French and German foreign policy statements. First, for the majority of years between 2008

Table 8 — Summary of changes in discourse

Variable (theme)	Prediction	France Change	Consistent w/theory	Germany Change	Consistent w/theory
Neorealism	+	—	N	N/A	N/A
Neoclassical Realism	—	=	N	+	N
Institutionalism	—	=	N	+	N
Liberalism	—	=	N	=	N
Constructivism	—	=	N	=	N
Democracy	—	—	Y	—	Y

and 2014, interactions with Russia reflected institutionalist focus on multilateral cooperation. When dealing with international crises both countries demonstrate clear support for solutions that include Russia as a key contributor. This pattern changed however when responding to crises in which Russia was a primary actor, i.e., the conflicts examined in this study, first in Georgia, then in Ukraine. In response to these events, rhetoric displaying constructivist themes overwhelmingly dominated the discussions. Below these regularly dominant trends ran the current of discussions of democracy in Russia that never reached predominance but at times constituted a noticeable portion of the rhetoric. As with the previous rhetoric, both cases revealed a similar trend. Early references express support for the state and trajectory of Russian democracy but later discussions, when they appear at all, reveal concern toward Russian domestic politics.

At the same time, some differences emerged between the two cases. From a neorealist perspective, French rhetoric regularly included discussions of power and polarity while these themes never appeared in German discourse. With respect to the related neoclassical realist approach, the texts reveal another albeit less significant difference. Themes associated with this theory appear frequently in each case and at times overtake others to become the dominant discourse but not with the same frequency. Neoclassical realist rhetoric appears as dominant discourse in three years in the Germany case—2005, 2009, and 2010—while it achieves this status only once in the France case, in 2009. This difference does not reflect too great a difference however since in both 2005 and 2010 neoclassical realist rhetoric appeared next most frequently to institutional discussions. Finally, evidence pertaining to liberal perspectives differed between the French and German cases. With respect to the former, these themes

consistently trailed most other themes and rarely manifested themselves after 2007. The latter case however reveals much greater emphasis although its importance relative to other discourse rises and falls over time without showing any clear pattern.

Despite these divergent findings, the discourse reveals an even greater harmony with regard to the analysis of the various hypotheses considered. Ultimately, the texts demonstrate support only for the democratic peace hypothesis in both instances, despite minimal salience over time. Normative explanations, while overwhelming dominant in both cases, fail to offer an independent explanation because there was no change in the emphasis between 2008 and 2014. Similarly, institutional perspectives cannot explain changes in foreign policy behaviors despite regular, frequent references to the need for multilateral problem-solving because of a lack of change between the cases. Neither does either variant of realism offer a satisfactory explanation, albeit for different reasons between cases. In the German case, I found no change over time. In the French case, both perspectives demonstrated change over time but in ways contrary to theoretical explanations. Finally, a liberal interpretation also fails to indicate a distinction over time in both cases. Only an explanation founded on the expectations that democracies behave in distinctly different ways toward other democracies than non-democracies finds support in French and German foreign policy discourse.

It is important to acknowledge that this study does not specifically account for all potential influences on foreign policies. For instance, during the period under consideration, Europe experienced what has been called the “great recession” or the financial crisis. As evidenced above, this topic never emerged as an issue upon which relations with Russia were founded. While this clearly occupied that attention of decision makers in European countries, it

is unclear to what extent these factors impacted relations between France and Germany and Russia. Looking at the GDP data incident to the crises fails to offer a clear distinction between cases but rather shows similar economic performance in the countries in the quarters that lead up to events in Georgia and Ukraine. In 2008, France and Germany experience both growth as well as contraction in GDP (OECD, 2016a). The economy of the former grew 0.35% in the first quarter but receded by 0.47% in the second quarter. Similarly, the German economy grew by 0.85% in the first quarter while declining by .26% in the second. At the same time, the third quart of 2008 again led to negative growth in GDPs for these countries (-0.29% and -0.37%, respectively), making it clear that their economies were in trouble. By the time of the Georgia crisis in that year, the outlook for both these economies was negative (Dominguez and Shapiro, 2013). In the following years, these countries experienced similar changes although at different times. The first two quarters of 2014, the French economy contracted by .04% in the first quarter but increased by 0.13% in the second. Conversely, the German economy grew in the first quarter by 0.72% before declining by 0.06% in the second quarter. By the third quarter, both economies had experienced growth again. Moreover, the overall expectation at the beginning of the year was for continued economic growth in both countries, at 0.6% for France and 1.6% for Germany (OECD, 2016b). These data portray distinctions between the two time periods—i.e., both the trajectory of economic activity and the overall economic outlook differed between 2008 and 2014.

Incorporating the approach outlined at the beginning of this paper, it is plausible to articulate an explanation based on the impact of the global financial crisis and European recession. Specifically, in 2008, this argument would suggest that France and Germany were in

the midst of economic contraction and wanted to avoid costly foreign policies. Given that sanctions hurt both the sender and the target countries, France and Germany were reluctant to further damage already hurting economies. Alternatively, this perspective implies that by 2014 French and German economies had recovered and policy makers no longer feared the downward effects on growth from sanctions, allowing them to support EU sanctions.

This paper does not specifically investigate such assertions so these concerns cannot immediately be evaluated. Furthermore, the data gathered in support of this paper are insufficient to answer the question directly. Additional textual sources such as parliamentary debates, party manifestos or statements by business leaders should be examined in an effort to discern discourse related to this particular hypothesis. At the same time, this possibility is reflective of liberal arguments founded on the priority of economics in foreign policy making, which I found not to be determinative. Ultimately, I conclude that although the economic crisis consumed significant attention and may have impacted the foreign policies of France and Germany, the initial findings suggest that this is not the case. However, given the initial empirical support, this explanation may merit future independent consideration.

Broader implications

First, this study finds support for the assertion that democratic peace logic applies to cases beyond war and peace and includes other types of coercive behavior such as economic sanctions. Democratic states such as France and Germany refrain from pursuing foreign policies that impose costs on the target state that is seen as a democracy or progressing toward western-style, liberal democracy. Instead, they seek alternate solutions that emphasize the benefits of the target's changing its policy. However, when interacting with a non-democracy, states are willing

to take a confrontational stand and employ coercive means to get another country to change its behavior. These findings do not suggest, however, that other concerns do not matter to foreign policy decision makers. The rhetoric clearly reflects that leaders pay significant attention to both norms and material interests. In both cases the discourse reveals a predominant concern with issues of international law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity in reaction to Russian interventions. Similarly, policy makers expressed an interest in coordinating policy through institutional mechanisms, particularly via informal multilateral consensus and compromise. Regardless of these motivations, when approached with a decision on cooperation versus conflict, democratic policy makers take into account the form of regime in the target state and adopt distinctly different policies in response.

At the same time, the findings related to democratic peace remain limited because the current analysis fails to address causal mechanisms behind the relationship between domestic political institutions and foreign policy. Several explanations have been suggested for the democratic peace both from rationalist and constructivist perspectives but the data considered herein does not necessarily support one argument over the other. Nevertheless, the overwhelming presence of constructivist themes in the rhetoric surrounding the conflicts points to a correlation between normative factors and democratic decision making.

As much as these findings reveal about French and German foreign policy, their implications are not limited to the specific cases involved. Stepping back to examine broader theoretical questions, the conclusions from cases provide insight into two gaps identified at the beginning, namely perceptions and democratization. As argued in the findings of both case studies, revisions in the views of policy makers toward the state of democracy in Russia, from

positive to negative, led to changes in policy from cooperation to confrontation, as predicted by democratic peace theory. However, this change is not based on an objective measure of democracy such as the existence of specific political institutions or individual freedoms as reflected in the typical measures of democracy. On the contrary, these rankings did not change between 2008 and 2014. Freedom House assigned Russia a score of 5.5 out of 10, which put Russia in the category of “not free.” Similarly, the Polity IV project evaluated Russia as a 4 out of 10, classifying it as an “anocracy¹⁴,” which is a middle category between autocracy and democracy. In other words, in quantifiable terms, Russia was no more or less democratic one case than the other. However, as the discourse reveals, policy makers *perceived* a difference in Russia, which resulted in different behaviors, which supports Owen’s (1994) findings that a democracy’s perceptions of the other state matter. Specifically, these findings suggest that the range of states toward which democracies may act according to democratic peace logic may be greater than that normally considered in purely quantitative analyses. Alternatively, the number and types of states that democracies treat as non-democracies may also be greater than anticipated. Applying these conclusions to studies of the democratic peace presents a methodological challenge to quantitative analyses due to the difficulty in measuring one state’s perceptions of another. Unless such a factor can be found, future research to further investigate the effect of perceptions would have to rely on qualitative studies.

¹⁴ According to the Global Report 2014 an anocracy “is characterized by institutions and political elites that are far less capable of performing fundamental tasks and ensuring their own continuity. Anocratic regimes very often reflect inherent qualities of instability or ineffectiveness and are especially vulnerable to the onset of new political instability events, such as outbreaks of armed conflict, unexpected changes in leadership, or adverse regime changes (e.g., a seizure of power by a personalistic or military leader). Anocracies are a middling category rather than a distinct form of governance. They are countries whose governments are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic but, rather, combine an often incoherent mix of democratic and autocratic traits and practices.” (Center for Systemic Peace, 2014: 19)

The findings that perceptions influence foreign policy extend beyond democratic peace explanations. The specific policies considered in this research suggest that such logic accounts for French and German reactions but this fact does not limit conclusions concerning perceptions to this point of view. Considering the range of theories employed to account for foreign policy decisions, perceptions could perform a role in any of them. From a realist perspective, leaders may make decisions based on perceived rather than actual changes in system structure. Specifically, one country may view another as having increased in capabilities, whether material or economic, when in fact it has not resulting in balancing activities that are not merited based on 'objective' factors. Both balance of threat and neoclassical realist understandings already account for this possibility in their considerations of a state's aggressiveness or assessment of intentions, respectively. Institutional considerations are likewise amenable to the impact of perceptions based on leaders view of the effectiveness of international institutions. For example, an important aspect of this perspective is the influence of the 'shadow of the future' which encourages states to abide by international rules or norms. This consideration however relies on decision makers' abilities to interpret the likelihood of other states' willingness to comply in the future, which is inherently perceptual. Clearly, a systemic constructivist viewpoint appreciate the importance of leaders' interpretation of their environment. As mentioned above, the cases considered provide tentative support for democratic peace founded on normative considerations. At the same time, other normative explanations may also be open to the inclusion of perceptions. Similar to interpretations of democracy, a country's understanding of another's compliance with any international norm may not be entirely founded on objective measures but rather may depend on interpretations of policy makers. Therefore, while the findings above are founded on

democratic peace considerations, they open up the possibility that alternative explanations may also incorporate leaders' views of a variety of aspects of target states when making decisions.

In conjunction with the findings regarding the influence of leaders' assessment of other states, the results of this study highlight the possibility that foreign policy makers also assess the direction of movement or trajectory of democracy in a target state. As seen above, French and German policy makers did not assess Russia to be a full-fledged, western-style democracy but rather a country that was unequivocally on its way toward becoming one. While some decision makers (Schroeder 2003) strenuously endorsed Russian democracy, western leaders in the early years examined in this study more often highlighted Russia's progress and praised the extent to which their system had democratized since the demise of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the little data that emerged in latter years showed dissatisfaction with the progress of Russian democracy. As another contribution to refining the democratic peace theory, the findings above suggest that democratic trajectory in a country is a factor, as an input to leaders' perceptions, in the behavior of democracies toward other states. By itself, analysis of democratization or decline toward authoritarianism is less problematic than perceptions by itself. Research using measures of democratization are easy to find. However, when combined with the idea of perceptions, the problems confronted by qualitative analyses return.

Future considerations

While the case studies considered for this dissertation provide insight into French and German policies specifically and relate to democratic peace more broadly, additional research is necessary to bolster the claims made with respect to democratization and perceptions. First, the initial findings from these case studies could be reconsidered using additional qualitative data as

well. Referring back to Fetzer's (2013) categories of political discourse, I included no references from the category of 'politics from below' which consists of rhetoric from those outside of government to include opposition parties, think tanks, and interest groups. Similarly, conducting structured interviews with those involved in policy making would also provide a rich source of data. Incorporating data from these sources would open up the possibility of examining interactions between decision makers and others, which would provide insight into several of the theoretical perspectives, especially neoclassical realist and liberal points of view.

Another avenue for additional consideration is to examine other EU member states and consider their reactions to Russian interventions. Especially helpful would be other mature, western democracies that differ from France and Germany in significant ways or eastern European states which may provide insight into the role of the EU and influence of larger states. Alternatively, investigation of the reactions of democracies outside the EU such as the US, Canada, or Japan may shed additional light on the subject. Finally, one could consider French and German reactions to other states in or potentially in transition to democracy such as Iran whom the EU had also sanctioned. More significantly, this study should be augmented to investigate the sources of democratic foreign policy. In other words, the support for the democratic peace logic can be expanded to consider either rationalist or normative foundations behind the policies. As just mentioned, this would require additional data sources that would provide evidence for explanations such as those based on audience costs, signaling, or other institutional factors. Information on public opinion and/or opposition party perspectives for example.

Finally, this research obviously informs additional considerations of the impact of perceptions. As noted earlier, many different theoretical accounts may be subject to the influence of decision makers' interpretation of their environment. While the preceding examination superimposes this factor on the democratic peace logic, explanations based on rationalist, idealist, and constructivist perspectives are all subject to the suggestion that leaders rely on a variety of decision making faculties. Furthermore, the effect of perceptions could be incorporated into research into various stages of conflict. My research focused on state reactions to military interventions into a third states territory and supports explanations based on the democratic peace logic. This approach focuses on the lack of confrontational responses between democratic regimes, either in the form of military conflict or other coercive actions such as sanctions. A variety of models exist describing the progression of conflict from the US Institute for Peace's (2016) conception of three phases to Alker, Gurr, and Rupesinghe's description of six stages (2001). The implications of both the democratic peace logic, regime trajectory, as well as the influence of perceptions could be extended to research across the evolution of conflicts, such as conflict prevention, management, and resolution. For example, studies related to democratization as a means of conflict resolution (Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, 2007) may benefit from the consideration of perceptions.

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